

Priest Professor PhD Academician  
**DUMITRU STĂNILOAE**



**THE ROMANIAN PHILOKALIA**

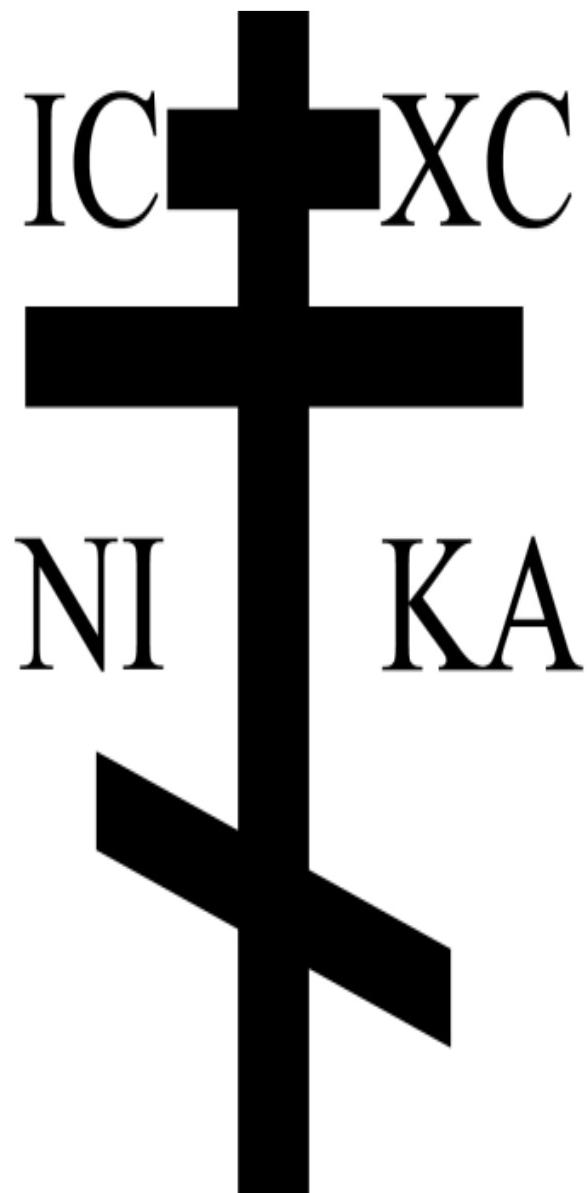
**- VOLUME III -**



**"In the Orthodox theology, Saint Maximos the Confessor, this giant of the Christian cogitation – maybe the greatest of all – has not found yet a representation worthy of him".**

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“And I, by receiving this list and reading it, my mind and my hearing and my cogitation stopped. Therefore I have asked you to allow me to refuse this thing. I have told you that these places barely can be understood by the ones who have advanced much in contemplation and have reached at the end of the highest and the most unapproachable knowledge, but not by me that crawl myself on the ground and, as yesteryear the cursed snake, I don't have any other food but the earth of the passions, muddy as a worm by the rottenness of the pleasures. Therefore, by doing this much and for many times, when I have seen that you do not accept this request of mine, fearing to not suffer something the love which unites us and makes us to have only one soul, even we bear two bodies, being possible that my refusal to seem to you a sign of disobedience, I have dared against my will the ones from above my power. I have reckoned that is better to be accused of daring and to be mocked by the ones who desire this, than the love to suffer any shaking or diminution. Because, after God, nothing is more valuable than love, in the eyes of the ones who have mind. Better said, nothing is more pleasant to God than it. Because love gathers in one place the divided ones, and can create in most of them, or in all of them, an undisturbed identity of the will”.

**Saint Maximos the Confessor**

# PHILOKALIA

**OR COLLECTION FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
THE HOLY FATHERS WHICH SHOWS HOW  
THE MAN CAN BE CLEANED, ENLIGHTENED  
AND BECOME PERFECT**

**VOLUME III**

## **Answers towards Thalassius**

TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>, INTRODUCTION AND  
FOOTNOTES BY

**DUMITRU  
STĂNILOAE**

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<sup>1</sup> Translation in Romanian language by Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae.

(Translated in English language, from the will of God, by the most worthless from men:  
E.l.t.)

## **The Preface of the Translator<sup>2</sup> at the Second Edition of the First Four Volumes**

Because the first four volumes of the Romanian Philokalia were printed at Sibiu between 1947-1948 in a small number of copies and that's why the edition was rapidly exhausted, I have consented to the proposal of "Harisma" Publishing House to print them in a second edition. The writings comprised in the Philokalia collection, reached at the twelve volume, they have been searched for because they describe a progressive way of the spiritual life, with the most concrete recommendations. This path is the one of the cleaning of the man of the passions which encloses him in the egotism of the passing satisfactions, closed to the horizon of the spiritual life always richer and eternal. And it is not a road invented by man but it is the way showed by the life of Jesus Christ and into which can advance the one who believes in Him. He Himself is the impersonation of this «way» or, better said, he Himself is the «way» and advancing in it is one with advancing into Him towards the target of the perfection at which He has elevated the assumed humanity through defeating with patience of our weaknesses and passions, willingly received, and of enduring with love the enemies to the crucifixion having as result the overcoming of the death and the eternity as happy life of Him as man and of the ones who will stick to Him through faith.

The program of the life described into the Philokalia it is an Christological one. It is the living of Christ by the power of Christ which the ones who live it have into themselves through ever more frequent prayer. It is the way towards the highest human nobility; it is the only way which promotes the union of the people between themselves and into Christ, opposed to the separations which bring so much human sufferance.

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<sup>2</sup> Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae.

The separation of the work of Christ from His work as a man - united with the collaboration of the man – it started to be made latter by the scholastic through too strict division in Dogmatic and Moral Theology. It have been told that the Dogmatic has got to represent what God is in the Self and what He has done for the man, and the Moral what the man has to do. It has been overlooked the fact that what the man does he doesn't do it alone; but he does it strengthened by Christ and by His Holy Ghost. That's why in the westerner theological sense there aren't any theological writings to describe, like the ones from the Philokalia, then road into Christ or of Christ's into the man, of Philokalia sort. In Catholicism there isn't known any uncreated energy of Christ, energy which to be working within man, strengthening the work of the man, and making him to advance ever more into Christ. About such a life into Christ, in Reform or in Neo-Protestant groups, there aren't any talks either. According to Catholicism, Christ saved us by giving though the cross satisfaction to God for the offence brought to Him by the sins of the people, finishing with this the savior work and retiring Himself into heaven; leaving on earth a substitute of Him who to be sharing to people the merits gained by Christ through the satisfaction brought by Him.

In Reform they are going even further almost completely denying the Mysteries into which the Catholicism does not see anymore the uncreated work of Christ. And in the new-Protestant movement there it is denied even the cross of Christ as mean of salvation and of overcoming death; even more, it is denied to Jesus even the name of Christ despite to the fact that He Himself assumed it (Matthew: 16: 16-17), name that shown Him as Son of God.

That's why all these western forms of the Christendom are satisfied of praising Jesus as something distant, Who has brought or will bring to them the forgiveness of sins, without seeing into Him the Worker of the salvation and of the sanctification into Him, lived into ever bigger union through prayer, but also through their effort to resemble themselves

more and more to Him, through their science of using His power for growing themselves into union and likeness with Him.

**Priest professor PhD Dumitru Stăniloae  
The Holy Easter, 1992.**

## Foreword

With the help of the good and almighty God, comes to light the third volume of the Philokalia. We apologize to the readers that this volume is a heavier spiritual food. But the importance of this writing of Saint Maximos the Confessor it is too great of not having us been tempted to publish it. The following volumes will almost all of them be much easier.

The present volume comprises on from the two great works of Saint Maximos the Confessor, this one being entitled: "About Different Heavy Places from the Holy Scripture", written around the years 931-633 and addressed to the abbot Thalassius, of which reason we call it shortly: "Answers towards Thalassius"<sup>3</sup>.

The motif which urged us to give into the Philokalia this work is the following: in the Greek Philokalia are comprised from the work of Saint Maximos, besides the "Heads about Love", the "Interpretation at The Lord's Prayer" and "Gnostic Heads", another writing in 500 heads entitled: "Different Heads: Theological, Economical, and about Virtue and Sin"<sup>4</sup>.

But because through the researches of W. Soppa<sup>5</sup> and M. Th. Disdier<sup>6</sup> established that from these 500 hundreds heads 422 hundreds are literal or almost literal excerpts from "Answers towards Thalassius", we thought that it is preferable to give this writing in its entirety for better understanding the cogitation of the Saint.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Introduction to the second volume of The Romanian Philokalia.

<sup>4</sup> Migne G. P. 90, 1177-1400, κεφάλαίαν θεολογικά τε καὶ οἰκονομικά καὶ περὶ αρετῆς κακίας. In the Greek Philokalia they form a group with the Gnostic Heads, forming together 700 heads, of which the Gnostic Heads are given as the first and the second hundreds, and these ones as the three to seven hundreds. The Philokalia, second edition, p. 232-256, 256-316. But the title of the first two hundreds heads it is different from the last five hundreds, from where it is seen that there are two works united together. The titles coincide with the ones from G. P.

<sup>5</sup> Die diversa Kapita unter den Schriften des hl. Maximus, in deutscher und quellenkritischer Beleuchtung, Dresden, 192, no. 8, p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> Une oeuvre douteuse de Saint Maxim le Confesseur Les cinq Centuries Théologique, in Echos d'Orient, 34, 1931, p. 160-178.

This fact urged us the more as after these ascertains there are strong motives to believe that not Saint Maximos the Confessor composed himself the 500 hundred heads, but this work was done by a later author, compiling from the works of the Saint, maybe even at the beginning of the XII<sup>th</sup> century. This opinion is base on the fact that the scholia at the “Answers towards Thalassius”, which provided not less than 221 from the 500 heads, are improbably of being of the Saint Maximos the Confessor, but rather of someone who probably lived after the Saint. It is right that in the Foreword at the Scholia – which is of an obscurity that Saint Maximos maybe did not equaled it ever<sup>7</sup> – their author declares his identity with the author of the “Answers towards Thalassius”<sup>8</sup>. But forgetting about these, he often presents, in different scholia, the ideas from the answers, with the word: “says” (namely: Saint Maximos says), showing therefore the author of the “Answers” as being different by himself. And then, the author of the scholia praises sometimes the clarity, the depth, the elegance of the explanations from the “Answers”, which the Saint Maximos himself couldn’t do it. Sometimes, then, the scholia are reduced to two or three words, which bring not any contribution to the understanding of ideas from the “Answers”. Through this fact they are proved as simple notes made by an attentive reader, but not real explanations, as they would have been if Saint Maximos himself would have thought later to do through them easier to be understood some passages from his writing<sup>9</sup>.

Besides these motives, which are brought out from context of the Scholia, there also some external indices which strengthen our proposal that these are from later on. The Patriarch Photius knew the “Answers towards Thalassius”, as the description<sup>10</sup> that he does to them shows it, but it seems that he didn’t know the Scholia. Therefore it is probable that

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<sup>7</sup> See M. Th. Disdier, *cited work*, p. 164.

<sup>8</sup> See G. P. 90, 265; The Romanian Philokalia, volume III, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Disdier, *cited work*, p. 165.

<sup>10</sup> Library, cod. 190, G. P. 103, 637 A – 645 C.

the Scholia would have been composed after the year 857, when Photius wrote.

The four of the scholia rebuke Nilus the Young<sup>11</sup>, character who have to be identified with the disciple of John the Italian (from around 1040) and about whom Ana Comnen says that he was condemned at Constantinople by a Synod in the time of the Emperor Alexius Comnen (1108-1118), because he was sustaining the Monophysite thesis that the humanity of Christ was deified “through nature” (φυ σει νεωνη υαι το πρόσλημα), not understanding anything from the hypostatical union<sup>12</sup>. So, either these two scholia are added later, this that ought to be proved by a research of the manuscripts, or the Scholia in their entirety are written at the end of the XI<sup>th</sup> century. In this case neither the 500 heads are written before this time. And as these 500 heads are certified by manuscripts from the XIII<sup>th</sup> century, their compilation must have been done in the XII<sup>th</sup> century, probably at its beginning<sup>13</sup>.

But somebody could ask: If the Scholia come from another author and from such a late time, why have I translated them also in this volume? Because whether not all of them, but at least a good part of them, bring important clarifications to the ideas from the “Answers”, or precious records (for instance, the Scholia 20 and 21 at the Answer 65).

In what concerns me, the content of the writing “Answers towards Thalassius” it is so rich, that it is difficult to be summarized. This work would be necessary to be widened through interpretations, than to be compressed into a summary. The summarizing it is the more difficult as it doesn’t develop in a systematical way its content of ideas, but presents it spread and with comebacks, with the occasion of interpreting

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<sup>11</sup> Scholium 1 at Answer 42, p. 149 (P. G. 90, 409); Scholium 9 la Answer 53, p. 232 (P. G. 90. 508); Scholium 1 at Answer 62, p. 360 (P. G. 90, 661); Scholium 14 at Answer 64, p. 415 (P. G. 90, 729).

<sup>12</sup> The Alexiad, book X, P. G. 131, 697-700. In this sense must be corrected the translation of the Scholium 1 at the Answer 62, p. 360, where we have interpreted φυσιθεσιται as: the ones who reckon that the natures stay by themselves. I believe that the Greek term should be φυσιθεται and it means: the ones who sustain the deification through nature.

<sup>13</sup> Disdier, *cited work*, p. 161.

some obscure passages from the Holy Scripture, in whose presentation cannot be ascertained some order.

Another difficulty in the way of a summarization it is the character of the writing of Saint Maxim the Confessor. Even a Photius complained that the style of Saint Maximos is burdened, heavy and obscure, avoiding the direct expressing and loving the metaphors<sup>14</sup>. But the newer researchers ascertained that his writing even seeming to be unwieldy, this is not due to a meaningless piling up of words, but just to the extraordinary richness of nuances of his cogitation, to which it corresponds the same richness of words. Tixeront could say: Maximos is a mystic who is in the same time also a metaphysician and an ascetic, who from the contact with the Aristotelian philosophy has gained a stringency and a precision of the cogitation, which vainly would be sought at the Aeropagite<sup>15</sup>.

The wide, deep and harmonic thinking of Saint Maximos the Confessor, it has found a presentation worthy of itself in the book of an extraordinary density, solidity and penetration, of Hans Urs von Balthasar, entitled: "The Cosmic Liturgy"<sup>16</sup>. In the Orthodox theology, Saint Maximos the Confessor, this giant of the Christian cogitation – maybe the greatest of all – haven't found yet a representation worthy of him. The thought of trying such an enterprise arouses an almost paralyzing feeling. It is the sentiment aroused by any alpine massive at the thought of embracing it; anyway, the endeavor of presenting Saint Maximos requires a prolonged time to be brought, somewhat satisfying, at its accomplishment.

Thus, all you would say about him, it seem to you an impiousness, a presentation of the mountain through a few pebbles scratched out of it, or through a clumsy drawing which deforms and lowers its overwhelming majesty.

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<sup>14</sup> G. P. 90, 268.

<sup>15</sup> Precis de Patologie (1934), p. 395.

<sup>16</sup> Kosmische Liturgie, Fr. i. Br. 1941.

So it is, of course, also what is said bellow about the cogitation of this Saint, a cogitation unfolded in the “Answers towards Thalassius”.

The angle of which Saint Maximos sees and explains everything is the divine Logos. The Logos gives sense to the human life, and He fills up with senses (reasons) all the things of the world, related with which one lives in a way of another in this life. Normally, the man through the Logos from himself must himself be weaved with the divine Logos and with the reasons of the things.

But through falling into the sin, was hidden together with the divine Logos, both the personal rationality and the rationalities from the world. The man fell in the narrow zone of the feeling, through which he remains only at the surface of the things. Through this he has become irrational<sup>17</sup>.

The feeling it has firstly the meaning of perception of the senses, of acknowledgement through the senses, without any moral or immoral qualification. As such, it is allowed by God, for the mind noticing the reasons from the sensitive things, to ascend towards the knowledge of God<sup>18</sup>.

But to it very easily it is associated a pleasure or a pain, because some material aspects of the things are favorable to the body, and other are unfavorable to it. The feeling as pleasure or as pain occasioned by the things it is the condemnable feeling, because it ties the man on the material surface of the things, making him forgetting about their higher senses and over all of the spiritual order. These pleasure and pain related to the sense the man hasn't have it from the beginning, but he has had inside him some sort of capacity of rejoicing with the mind of the ones relates to it, of the spiritual things. But the man lowered this capacity from the spiritual plan on the bodily one, uniting it with the feeling. There has been produced, through the will of the man, of through the lack of attention and of a steady will, a transfer of the capacity of pleasure from the

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<sup>17</sup> Introduction, p. 9; G. P. 90, 253.

<sup>18</sup> Introduction, p. 1; G. P. 90, 245.

spiritual plan on the biological one. Thus the man has moved his pleasure through the mediation of the senses towards the sensitive ones<sup>19</sup>.

This sticking of the man towards the sensitive ones, being a falling down from the connection with the spiritual order, it is also a falling from his nature, a falling in a para-natural existence (from κατὰ φύσιν λα παραν φύσιν)<sup>20</sup>. The falling doesn't consist only in the fact that the man works exclusively with the senses, but it has a total character and it means a perverting of the natural way of working, though the perversion mean in the same time an exaggeration of the working through the senses and an elevation of this work at the leading role. The total and the perverted character of the work it is shown in the fact that the senses neither now work alone, but the mind (the cogitation) puts itself in their service, contriving ways of pleasure from their contact with the material surface of the things. In the state of cleanness, the cogitation still was present in the feeling, but not for ministering to the feeling for pleasure, but for detaching from the aspects noticed by it the reason of the things, leading the feeling from the feeling itself. Now it is totally "descended" into feeling, or under it, being led by this one. In a certain way, the fallen man, though he has become irrational, he hasn't totally sacked the rationality, but this one has also fallen with him, leaving its chair of righteous and impartial judge and forging arguments in the favor of the passions. In this way the man is below the animal, "which he has exceeded in irrationality, moving the according to the nature rationality in what is contrary to the nature"<sup>21</sup>.

But this perverting of the cogitation in the state of falling implies also a perverting of the senses. Because the sense which aren't guided anymore by rationality, they act contrary to the nature and towards its damaging, through the

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<sup>19</sup> Answer 61, 333; G. P. 90, 628.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Introduction, 9; G. P. 90 253.

passionate exaggeration of their work, abusing of their function<sup>22</sup>.

The sticking to the seen<sup>23</sup> side of the world, through feeling and the searching for the pleasure which this one can offer it to the body, as also the fleeing from the pain that can come out of it, they give birth to all the passions, as the same number of tongues with which the surface of the world keeps us attached to itself. Better said the sap which feeds or moves itself in all the passions, it is the bodily love for the self, (*φιλαυτία*), which the man searches for satisfying it related to the material surface of the world<sup>24</sup>.

A great role belongs in the conception of Saint Maximos the confessor to the pleasure and to the pains. The searching for the pleasure gives birth to a string of passions, the fleeing from pain to another string<sup>25</sup>. But between pleasure and pain there is also a ceaseless reciprocal causality. They alternate one to another in a vicious circle. Searching for the pleasure, the man surely will have, after tasting the pleasure, the pain. And fleeing from pain, he searches for escape in the arms of the pleasure, for finding beyond it an even bigger pain. Nobody can break this circle of the pleasure and of the pain, for remaining only with the pleasure. Who searches for the pleasure come across the pain, and who flees from the pain through the pleasure he also comes across the pain<sup>26</sup>. From here doesn't result a fatality. This succession cannot be overcome; and not gradually, through a taming during several incarnations, but through a jumping out from the circle of the pleasure and of the pain. It is necessary for you to stand unmoved both to the temptation of the pleasure and to the menace of the pain, as an immobilized needle of a pair of scales. This is the state of the

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<sup>22</sup> Answer 65; G. P. 90, 749.

<sup>23</sup> The English Philokalia uses as a corresponding term the word: "visible" (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>24</sup> Introduction 10; G. P. 90, 256 C.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Introduction, 9; G. P. 90, 253.

dispassion, of the dispassionate man<sup>27</sup>. But it is not a feeling of a cadaver, in the Buddhist apathy.

But for understanding this thing we must see from where the bodily pleasure and the bodily pain have emerged.

The bodily pleasure and the bodily pain could have been born through the fact that the man as limited being has been endowed by God, as we have been showing above, with the capacity of rejoicing of what makes him whole on the essential or on the spiritual plan of his own being, and of getting sorry about the diminution of his spiritual life through its departing from the spring of its true existence. Only to God isn't given to alternate the joy with the pain, or at least to try a new joy, through a surplus of life that would come to Him from outside, once He is endless.

But the man having also a bodily side, the capacity of joy or of grievance that he has in his entire being, has become accustomed to actualize itself as pleasure for what increases his bodily life – by seeming to him that this is an increase of his integral being – and as a displeasure for what restricts his bodily prosperity – again confounding the body with his whole being. And the ones who increase or diminish his bodily life are sensitive things. Thus, through falling, the good and the bad for the man has been limited to what is good or bad for the body, namely to the sensitive world; this is the knowledge or the false knowledge to which he has ended through falling, the knowledge given by the world as a tree of knowledge of such a good and such a bad. Thus the man hasn't reckoned anymore that the good consists in the spiritual plan, and neither has reckoned the bad as lack of the spiritual things<sup>28</sup>.

That the pleasure and the pain haven't appeared out of nothing, but they are a turning towards the material things of

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<sup>27</sup> "So the one who doesn't want the bodily pleasure and does not fear the pain, he has reached dispassionate. Because in the same time with these ones and with the bodily love, that have give them birth, he has killed all the passions which grow up through this ones and through those ones", Introduction, 14; G. P. 90, 260 -261.

<sup>28</sup> Introduction, 12; P. G. 90, 257; Answer, 43, p. 151; P. G. 90, 412-413; Question 21, p. 62 and the followings; G. P. 90, 312.

an energy through which the man is meant to search for the spiritual ones and to avoid their loss, it is also shown by the fact that both for the seeking and the joy of the good ones, and also the unhappiness and the grievance for the bad ones, the human soul has a faculty: of the lust and of the anger. These faculties have not been born from the orientation of the man towards the sensitive ones, but through this one they have been also perverted, as also the rationality, as also the feeling, turning themselves towards what isn't ought, or pouring their entire energy and feeling. So it is explained the occurrence of the conform with the nature affects, after the man's falling into the sin. These affects are: the appetite and the pleasure of eating, the fear of pain and of death, some sort of manifestations of the bodily conservation instincts. Until they are kept in the rein of the rationality, being limited to what is necessary to the body, these affects are irreproachable. But when they are satisfied with exaggeration, they are becoming sinful passions<sup>29</sup>. That's why they mustn't be suppressed while we are living of the earth. But to the future life they do not move themselves anymore with us. Proper-said, in the future life, when we will be "pure minds", there cannot be spoken anymore about lust and anger, because they do not have anymore the reflex movement which they have in the life from here, once only God works then into the man. But they still remain in a somewhat form, namely the first one as "endless vigor of the will which delights of them"<sup>30</sup>.

But if it is so, the getting out from the iron circle of the bodily pleasure and pain does not mean astonishment in insensibility, but the elevation to another pleasure and to other vigor of spiritual order, which, far from weakening its nature, gives to it the true strengthening.

But let's see now how has become possible that for man jumping out from the circle of the bodily pleasure and pain, of to free himself from passions.

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<sup>29</sup> Answers 20-21; G. P. 90, 269.

<sup>30</sup> Answer 55, p. 266, 267; G. P. 548D, 549B.

This possibility has been given by the descent and by the fight of the Logos into the body. After the man has fallen down from the clear seeing and connection with the Logos through the rationality from himself and through the reasons from the world, in the dark mire of the seen side of the world, into which he was fumbling carried away by the feeling lacked of the rationality's sight, also the Logos has acted to liberate him, by descending Himself of the battle field where the man was lying defeated. The fight done now by the Logos and which we must do it ourselves being helped by Him, takes an ascetic character. There must be done a fight in the human nature itself for overthrowing the domination of the feeling upon the rationality, for being taken the veil of the feeling from upon the cogitation, for this being able to see the rays of the Logos into the world and for intuit Him also beyond the world. Better said the feeling itself must be liberated from pleasure and pain, which injects its unrestrained impulse towards the sensitive ones; it must be made a neutral tool of knowledge in the hand of the cogitation; in other terms the mind must be "withdrawn from the feeling", as the lust and the anger with their pleasure and pain also, and must be directed towards the spiritual ones. This is the same with the liberation of the human nature from passion, or from the attraction of the pleasure and the fear of pain, through overcoming the bodily love for the self.

And as the man weakened by the sin, the man fallen from connection with the Logos, it is in the same time a man enslaved by the material side of the world, the liberation fight that must be started in the human nature, it must be a struggle of unclenching from this material side of the world. The man falls down in contact with the world, and he must also in an attitude towards it to get himself up again. He falls through the world reduced only to the material side; but through the world rediscovered in its spiritual depths he raises himself towards God. This fight for strengthening and restoring the human nature, it must be firstly started by the Logos into the humanity that He assumed it as first-fruit of the entire

human nature, and then in each human subject in collaboration with him. And this is because only with the godlike power could be carried through successfully. Therefore, He took from the dough of the human nature, exposed to the assaults of the evil one, which tempt it with the pleasure and scares it with the pain, attracting it through these ones in all the passions. Believing Him only a man, the chieftains and the masteries of this world approached Him but He defeated them because His nature strengthened with the godlike nature stood unmoved against the temptation through pleasure and against the menace through pain<sup>31</sup>. The Logs had not the condemnable passions in the human nature that He brought it, but He had the affects according to the nature, which to the other people immediately becomes sins, when the temptation through pleasure it comes. So, having these affect He showed that the human nature can stand strong in the front of the pleasure and of the pain, without being lacked of its natural affects.

He has procured so, through His strengthened nature, immunized against the passions, such dough which has remained in solidarity with the entire leaven of the human nature.

Each man, if he stays through faith in connection with Christ, he can gain this strength, this immunity. He can this especially because Christ Himself is into him, helping him at the fight of strengthening the nature, of freeing from passions, namely of restoring the rationality and the mind as organs for union with God.

We do not insist upon the detailed method, or upon all the stages that the man must climb through from the living through the blind and passionate feeling, drowned in the material mire of the world, until the living in the light of God, shown in his mind and in the rationalities of the world. We note only the chief phases. The first phase one of cleansing the passions and achieving the virtues. This phase does not suppress the feeling, but makes it becoming again a pure work

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<sup>31</sup> Answer 21, p. 62 and the followings; G. P. 90, 312.

of knowledge, free from pleasure and pain. So is possible the virtue, through which the man does not break the connections with the world, but liberates himself from the slavery in which the world keeps him through the pleasure and the material utilities that it offers to him. The man uses now the world on the strict frame of the natural necessities and for restoring through love the relations with the fellow humans, namely of restoring the unity of the human nature. This is a first victory of the spirit into the man<sup>32</sup>. It has been realized “through Ghost” or “into the Ghost”, namely the power of the Holy Ghost passing through the spiritual deep of the man it strengthens the rationality and cleans the work of the senses<sup>33</sup>. Through the virtue the man is elevated from the against nature state to the one according to the nature. The virtuous man is the one who lives in accord with his nature, the man with the restored nature, namely with the strengthened nature, being given the fact that the virtue is spiritual strength, as unmoved habituation into good. But because the being of the virtue as strength we have it from Christ (Who is the Being of the virtue) the first effect of the grace of Christ is the restoration of the nature. The life according to the nature isn't a life from the exclusive powers of the human nature, but is a life as it is required by the meaning, the “rationality” of the nature, as it is necessary for the nature for existing in its normality<sup>34</sup>. In this phase the rationality has a great role, as factor that directs the feeling, as factor of objective judgment<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> “Because where the feeling is guided by rationality, the body is deprived of all the pleasure after the nature, not having the feeling free and loosen from all the rational chains, for ministering to the pleasure”. Answer 58, p. 305; G. P. 90, 597.

<sup>33</sup> “In the ones who have inherited the name of Christ... the Ghost moves the natural rationality”, Answer 15, p. 49, G. P. 90, 297.

<sup>34</sup> “Paths are the ways of the virtue in conformity with the natural law and the rationalities of the knowledge from the spiritual law, which are unveiled by the presence of God Word and which bring back the nature to itself and to its cause, through virtue and knowledge”. Answer 39, p. 134; G. P. 90, 393 A.

<sup>35</sup> “Perfect is the one who has overcome the pleasure and the pain of the body through rationality”. Answer 58, G. P. 90, 601.

From this step, which a first elevation of the man from the dungeon of the blind feeling towards the godlike Logos through rationality, the man elevates himself on the second step, which is the one of seeing the divine rationalities into the world. Now the divine rationality does not work anymore only hidden under the virtues, but it shows itself through the transparency of the nature and of the Scripture. The connection of the man with the divine Logos becomes more obvious and more powerful. This sight is called natural contemplation, not because it would be done exclusively with the natural powers of knowledge, but because one hand it direct itself towards the nature, and on the other one because it presupposes a restored human nature. This knowledge it is not so much knowledge through the deductive reasoning, but a simple understanding, representing a new elevation of the man from the discursive rationality, which is proper more to the virtuous phase, to the simple and intuitive knowledge of the mind<sup>36</sup>.

At last, from this supreme step of his activity, the man is elevated above himself, being filled up exclusively of the godlike uncreated work, namely becoming God after grace. This happens after the entire created work of his nature ceases; even the simple understanding of the mind is in a mystical death, in a full Sabbath, being given that the mind does not move anymore towards the created and limited things, but has met the infinite God, in front of Whom it must renounce at any attempt to comprise Him. Then the mind does not know God in a positive way, but in an apophatic way, through that quietness above speaking and the nescience above any understanding. Through ascesis the man has cleaned himself of all that is evil in his bodily and thinking movements, for emptying himself after of any created content of the soul, for being able to be filled up by God<sup>37</sup>. The man has raised himself to a life above

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<sup>36</sup> Answer 59, p. 332; G. P. 90, 616; Answer 60, 329; G. P. 90, 624.

<sup>37</sup> “And the Sabbath is the perfect non-working of the passions and the total ceasing of the movement of the mind around the created ones and its consummated passing to God, in Whom the one who has reached through virtue and knowledge, must not remember about the passions anymore... neither to gather the rationalities of the nature anymore... crying at God

nature<sup>38</sup>. The godlike energies will increase endlessly into us; our deification will progress into eternity. "Therefore, being us here in state of activity, we will reach once at the end of the centuries, the power and the work through which we activate coming to an end. But in the centuries to come, we won't be in activity, but in passivity, and that's why we won't ever reach at the end of our deification. Because the passion from then will be above nature, and there won't be any rationality to limit the endless deification of the ones who suffer it"<sup>39</sup>.

During this entire ascension we have been sustained by the force of the embodied Logos. He has been to us path, impulse, and attractive target; in front of the virtues and of the knowledge of the rationalities from the world he made Himself man with us, helping us to achieve the intact image of the human being, being given the fact that the virtues are the human images of the godlike goods, or the human face of the Godhead. In the deification phase, without ceasing of having also a human nature, it shows to us through its transparency His Godhead, making also our human nature the transparent environment of the godlike energies<sup>40</sup>. Christ, the man Who deifies Himself, filling up His humanity only with the uncreated divine energies, He transmits through the communion that He has it with the entire human nature, to our humanity also, the content of the divine energies. From Christ as deified man, flows into the man who has grown into Him through faith, virtue and contemplation, the deifying content of the uncreated energies.

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only through the perfect silence and representing Him only through the total nescience through exceeding". Answer 65, G. P. 756.

<sup>38</sup> Answer 59, p. 316; G. P. 609; Answer 53, p. 228; G. P. 90, 504.

<sup>39</sup> Answer 22, p. 72; G. P. 90, 320.

<sup>40</sup> "The goods from above nature they have as image and foretelling features the different modes of the virtues and the rationalities of the ones that can be known through nature. Through these ones God ceaselessly makes Himself man in the worthy ones. Blessed is so, the one who has transformed God into man within himself. Because after he has fulfilled the committing of this mystery, he suffers his transformation in God through grace, and this thing won't cease to be committed ever". Answer 22, p. 72, G. P. 90, 321 B.

Fallen through the ancestral sin from the divine Logos to the irrationality of the feeling, which does not notice but the material surface of the world, we raise ourselves through the Logos that come nigh to us as man; starting from the faith that He gives it to us at Baptism, as manifestation of His covered presence, through the rationality of the virtues and the contemplation of the spiritual senses of the worlds, as beginning of glimmer of His presence, to His unveiled sight and to the union with Him. The entire our ascension into Him we have done it in contact with the created world. Reached above, the world does not totally disappear, but we see it also here into Him. Because the ascension was nothing else but a continuous thinning of the being of the one who has ascended and of the world, for the Logos being more and more fully visible through them, for not being at last but an aerial world, bathed by the light of the sun Jesus. It is what Hans Urs von Balthasar expressed through the words: "Must not be forgotten also the fact that together with the apparition of the godlike archetype there will also appear the world in its perfect form, an eternalized one"<sup>41</sup>.

But the endless richness of contrasts, of counterpoints, of syntheses and harmonies which are born from the living dialectic between the human subject, Logos and world, along this ascension, it remains a treasure buried in the pages of Saint Maximos the Confessor's writings, until there will be find somebody to unbury it in all its beauty for the today world.

**Bucharest, the Baptism of the Lord, 1948.**  
**Priest Professor PhD Academician Dumitru**  
**Stăniloae**

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<sup>41</sup> Die "gnostischen" Centurien des Maximus Confessor, p. 45. And on is invited to see the Gnostic heads II, 15.

## **The Humble Monk Maximos towards the Most Pious Presbyter and Abbot Thalassius**

### **About Different Difficult Places from the Godlike Scripture<sup>42</sup>**

#### **To the Most Pious Servant of God, to Mister Thalassius, the Presbyter and the Abbot, Maximos, the Humble Monk, Joy**

After you have detached, you man of God, the soul in a rational way from the affection for the body and the mind you have totally withdrawn it from the feeling through the ghost, you have made your body<sup>43</sup> a most honored mother of all the virtues, and you have shown your feeling as inexhaustible spring of godlike knowledge, putting the company of the body with the soul only in the service of the good things, and using the feeling as organ through which to know the greatness of the moral ones, the beauty of the soul, to which it gives a shape seen through virtues and shows it to the ones from outside, to have You life as icon of the virtues placed in the sight of everybody towards imitation (1). And your feeling symbolically carves into the figurines of the seen ones the rationalities of the intelligible ones, and through them elevates the mind towards the simplicity of the intelligible views, for us to have Your knowledge, the not-wandering road of the truth, for passing through it towards the intelligible ones (2). That's why after you have totally rejected the addiction which ties on the feeling and on the body, crossing intensely with the mind the endless ocean of the words of the Ghost (of the Scripture), you are studying with the ghost the ones of the Ghost. But receiving from this One the unveiling of the hidden mysteries, the humbleness has

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<sup>42</sup> Περὶ διαφόρων ἀπόρων τῆς φείας γραφῆς (Regarding Different Problems of the Divine Scripture). In Latin language: Quaestiones ad Thalassium (Questions to Thalassius) G. P. 90, 243-786. In Romanian language we'll call it shortly: "Answers towards Thalassius".

<sup>43</sup> In Greek language the body is of feminine gender.

made you, however, to compose a list with many obscure places from the Holy Scripture, which you have sent it to us, asking from me, the one lacked of any virtue and knowledge, a written answer regarding their higher meaning.

And I, receiving this list and reading it, my mind and my hearing and my cogitation stopped. Therefore I have asked you to allow me to refuse this thing. I have told you that these places barely can be understood by the ones who have advanced much in contemplation and have reached at the end of the highest and the most unapproachable knowledge, but not by me that crawl myself on the ground and, as yesteryear the cursed snake, I don't have any other food but the earth of the passions, muddy as a worm by the rottenness of the pleasures. Therefore, by doing this much and for many times, when I have seen that you do not accept this request of mine, fearing to not suffer something the love which unites us and makes us to have only one soul, even we bear two bodies, being possible that my refusal to seem to you a sign of disobedience, I have dare against my will the ones from above my power. I have reckoned that is better to be accused of daring and to be mocked by the ones who desire this, than to suffer the love any shaking or diminution. Because, after God, nothing is more valuable than love, in the eyes of the ones who have mind. Better said, nothing is more pleasant to God than it. Because love gathers in one place the divided ones, and can create in most of them, or in all of them, an undisturbed identity of the will (3).

Therefore, please forgive to me, you first, honorable Father, this endeavor and ask also to others to forgive my boldness. Gain you for me the mercifulness of God through your prayers and make Him be helpful to me in what I am going to say, better said to give me right answer to every question. "Because all the good giving and all the perfect gift are from Him"<sup>44</sup>, as from the spring and the Father of all the knowledge

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<sup>44</sup> Jacob: 1: 17: KJB: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."; ROB:

and of the lighting powers, which he gives them on the measure of the worthy ones. Because only by trusting myself in you, I have accepted to fulfill your commandment, waiting for the benevolence of God as payment of the obedience.

So, by placing each question in front, in the order in which you have written them, I will give after it a short and precise answer, as much as I will be able, and as much as I will receive from God the grace and the power of understanding and of pious speaking. This is because I do not want to burden the hearing of the readers with a multitude of words. I don't want, especially because I know that these words will sound in your hearing, who have true knowledge and a close sight of the godlike ones, and who have passed beyond the disturbance of the passions and have left behind the whole affection of the nature, making Your rationality leader and whole rightly judge in all that are necessary to be done (4), and introducing the mind on the ladder of a superior understanding in the inner bosom of the godlike silence, where there is not perceived but a godlike happiness in an unknown way, a happiness of which greatness cannot be made known but by the experience that have about it the ones found worthy.

Just because that, some like these ones, they do not need but a brief indication in such matters, which show with anticipation the all-shining beauty of the secret visions contained into the godlike words and of the great spiritual meanings from them. Besides, I do not know if it is allowed to me to say even that much to you, who have become, according to the word of God, the salt of the earth and the light of the world, for the richness of the virtue and the great overflowing of knowledge, also cleaning from other the mud of the passions through the modes of the virtues and crossing through the nescience, which is an enslavement of the soul, with the light of the knowledge.

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"All the good giving and all the perfect gift is from above; descending from the Father of the lights, to Who there is no change or shadow of movement".

Therefore I pray You the all-sanctified Ones, and all of you who will read this writing, to not reckon the ones said by me as a norm of the spiritual explaining of these texts. Because I am much lower than the understanding of the godlike words and I need myself the teaching from others to understand these writings. But, if you can presuppose or find out something from yourselves or from others, reckon rather that one as being true, and believe that you have a higher and truer understanding. And this is known through than one that it gives certitude to the heart of the ones who wish themselves after the spiritual penetration of the secret things.

For the godlike word resembles to the water. It shows itself as in some plants and seedlings and as in different living creatures, in the ones who water themselves from the same Word, on their measure, both in form of deeds and of knowledge, springing up as a fruit through virtues, according to the quality of the virtue and of the knowledge of everyone, and passing from ones to the others (5). For it cannot be circumscribed and does not suffer to be closed inside of only one mind, being given its natural infinity.

So, firstly, you have commanded us to hurry towards the passions that bother us. Namely, how many and which they are, and to what end they reach passing through the middle phase that is characteristic to them; out of what power of the soul or out of what limb, each of them springing up, they give to the mind its shape (*μορφή*), and makes the body as a dye which colors through the thoughts of the sin the entire unhappy soul; what the meaning of the name of each one is and its work, the fruits and the countenances, as also the cunningness set up through them by the unclean devils, their unseen accompanying and dissimulations, how those one bring out in a hidden way the ones through the other ones, and how through ones they attract, in a luring way, towards the other ones; which the thinness (nuances) are, the diminutions, the increases and their huge swellings; how they cede, withdraw themselves, cease, insist, burst in more quickly of more slowly;

which are they justification before the soul as before a tribunal and the decisions made by the cogitation; the seen defeats and victories and the inner state that accompanies each of them; what is the reason for which the devils are allowed to trouble the soul with many passions, and this through themselves or through others (other things) (6); through what thought they bring, in inappropriate time, in front of our mind our own matters, through which they secretly start the bitter war against us, us who preoccupy ourselves with the ones that are not present as they would be present, stretching ourselves towards matters, or fleeing from them, namely suffering the first thing for the sake of the pleasure, and the second one due to the pain (7); about the manner of their presence inside us and about the complicated and diverse hallucinations that they arise in the dream during the sleep time; then, whether they are closed in some part of the soul or of the body, or they are in the whole body; and whether, being inside, they convince the soul through the spiritual passions to embrace the exterior ones through the mediation of the body and deceive it to totally surrender itself to the feeling, forsaking the ones that are proper to it according to its nature; or, being outside, through external touch to the body they shape the unseen soul according to the manner of the material ones (*πρός τά ύλια σχηματίζουσιν*)<sup>45</sup>, planting in it a composed form and giving to it the countenance of the matter received through imagination; and whether there is any order and any orderliness in their work, with planned cunningness, for trying firstly the soul through some passions and then to wage war against it through the others; and which (devils) precede, which follow in line, or which accompany which, whether they trouble the soul in a mixed way and with no order, randomly, through any passions; and then whether the soul is allowed to suffer such things from them outside Providence, or according to the Providence; and what the reason, for which the Providence forsakes the soul in any passion, is; and then, what is the manner of destroying any

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<sup>45</sup> “In material form” (E. l. t.’s n.).

of the listed passion and by what deed, words or thoughts the soul is freed from them and is cleaned of the defilement of the conscience; what virtue will he oppose to any passion to defeat it, chasing away the cunning devil and totally cutting off together with it the movement itself of the passion; and how will be the soul able, after the deliverance from the passions, to well scrutinize its own things; and with the help of what reasons and ways, reaching through that rationality according to the nature to dispassionate relations between the senses and the sensitive things, will shape the senses to stand in the service of the virtues, as it shaped them before through the passions, to stand in the service of the sin (8) and how will it do this good turning to use the ones though which it has been doing wrong before, now towards giving birth and sustaining the virtues; and how then, being delivered also from this relations (9), he will collect with understanding, through the natural contemplation into ghost, the rationalities of the created ones, detached from the sensitive symbols from inside them; and who after these rationalities, taking contact with the intelligible ones, through the mind become clean from that cogitation leaned towards the ones obeyed to the senses, it will receive the understanding of the simple ones and it will achieve the simple knowledge, which ties everything together according to the original rationality of the wisdom; at last, as after this one the soul, once passed beyond all the ones that exist and beyond their natural meanings, and detached from all power in a clean way, even from its own power of thinking, it will suffer that above understanding union with God Himself, and in this state, receiving in an unspoken way from Him the teaching of the true truth, as a seed, it won't ever deviate towards sin (10), not being there anymore room for the devil to attract it again towards evilness through deceitfulness, due to the knowledge of the One Who is Good through nature and beautifies all the ones that can impart themselves from Him?

Because you have commanded me to clarified in writing the rationalities, the ways and the causes of all of these, I pray

you to wait a little more for the word concerning them. If God will help, I will study these ones with a more appropriate occasion and more thoroughly in other writings, if I will feel everywhere in my mind such a power of understanding as to be able of daring to cross such a great and deep ocean. Because I am not ashamed of recognizing that I do not know the difficult to untangle plotting and cunningness of the unclean devils, being given the fact that the dust of the matter it still darkening the eyes of the soul and do not allow me to watch (contemplate) in a clean way the nature of the created ones and to discern from the heap of the ones exist the ones that seem to exist (11) only deceiving the lacked of rationality feeling. Because only the very contemplative and high at cogitation ones can really study some like these ones and can talk about them, namely only the ones who through much experience have achieved the power of knowing the good ones and the ones that aren't good, and they have received from God even what is the most honorable and higher than everything, namely the grace and the power of understanding well and to tell clearly the understood ones.

But for not remaining totally unenlightened the teaching about these things in the present work, I am going to tell few things about the birth of the passions, as much as it is necessary that You and the spiritual men like You to see the end from the beginning. And then I will pass to the interpretation of the heads that follow.

### **The Definition of the Evil**

The evilness never was and will never be something that subsists through its own nature. Because it hasn't in itself any being, or nature, or power, or work in the ones that are. It isn't either quality, or quantity, either relation, or place, either time, or position, either action (*ποίησις*), either movement, or aptitude, either passion (passiveness, affect) naturally contemplated in any existence and in no one of these it doesn't subsist through a natural kinship. But for containing it in a

definition I am going to say that the evil is the deviation (*έλλειψις*)<sup>46</sup> of the works of the powers (faculties) planted into nature from their purpose, and nothing else. Or again, the evil is the reckless movement (*άλογιστος*)<sup>47</sup> of the natural powers towards something else than their purpose, due to a wrong judgment. And purpose (*τέλος*)<sup>48</sup> I call the cause of the ones that exist, after which all the ones wish themselves in a natural way, even if the Cunning one, covering mostly of the time the envy under the appearance of the benevolence and cunningly convincing the man to move his desire towards something else from the ones that exist and not towards the cause, it has sown in him the ignorance of the cause.

So, the first man, not bringing the movement of the natural powers towards a purpose, he got ill with the ignorance of his cause, reckoning, by the advice of the snake, that that is God, about which the word of the godlike commandment has ordered him to have it as foe. He becoming in this way transgressor of the commandment and not knowing God, he stubbornly has mixed in all the feeling the whole thinking power and in this way he has embraces the composed and destroying knowledge, producer of passions, of the sensitive ones (13). And so “he has joined to the mindless beasts and has likened himself to them”<sup>49</sup>, by working, seeking and wanting the same things as they do in every way; and even surpassed them in irrationality, by moving that rationality according to the nature in what is against nature.

So, as much more the man was taking care only by the knowledge of the ones seen only through feeling, the more he gathered around himself the ignorance about God. And as much more he tightened to himself the ties of the ignorance, as he was sticking himself the more to the experience of tasting

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<sup>46</sup> Ellipse (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>47</sup> Thoughtless (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>48</sup> Finality (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>49</sup> Psalm: 49: 12: KJB: “Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.”; 48: 12: ROB: “And the man, being in honor, he understood not; he joined himself to the mindless beasts and likened himself to them”.

through feeling of the known material goods. But as much more he was filling himself up with this experience, the more was lightened the passion of the bodily self-love, which was born from it. And as much more he was taking care about the passion of the bodily love of the self, the more he was contriving many ways of producing the pleasure, which it is both the fear and the purpose of the bodily self-love. And because any evilness perishes together with the means that produce it, the man finding out through the experience itself, that any pleasure it surely has as descendant the pain, he had had the whole impulse towards the pleasure and the whole fleeing towards from the pain. For the first one he was fighting with all his power, and on the second one he was combating it with whole his zeal, imagining himself an impossible things, that through such a skillfulness he will be able to separate one from another, and the bodily love for the self will have united with itself only the pleasure, remaining untried by pain. Under the power of the passion he didn't know, as one can see, that the pleasure cannot be ever without pain. Because into the pleasure there is mixed the torment of the pain, even though it seems to be hidden to the ones who taste the pleasure, by the fact that the passion of the pleasure dominates. Because what dominates always comes above, covering the feeling of everything that stands nigh.

So has sneaked in the big and the countless multitudes of the corrupting passions in the life of the people. In this way has become our life full of sighs, by honoring the causes that destroy it, and by contriving and cultivating the occasions of its corruptness, due to the ignorance. In this way the unique nature has been cut in countless little pieces and we who are of the same nature, we eat each other as the reptiles and as the beast do. Because seeking the pleasure of ourselves, due to the bodily love, and striving for fleeing from the pain due to the same cause, we are contriving unimaginable sources of passions, which are causing corruptness. So, when we are taking care through pleasure about the bodily love of ourselves

(*φιλαυτία*)<sup>50</sup>, we give birth to the covetousness of the belly, to the pride, to the vain glory, to the boastfulness, to the love of silver, to the avarice, to the tyranny, to the bragging, to the arrogance, to the recklessness, to the insanity, to the self-appreciation, to the contempt, to the insult, to the uncleanness, to the levity, to the waste, to the lack of restraint, to the frivolity, walking by punching the clouds, the slackness, the impulse for maltreating, for taking in derision, to the much speaking, to the speaking at the inappropriate time, the ugly speaking, and all that are of this kind. And when we sharpen even more through the pain the way of the bodily self-love for ourselves, we give birth to the anger, to the envy, to the hatred, to the enmity, to the keeping in mind of the evil, to the calumny, to the gossip, to the intrigue, to the sadness, to the despair, to the defaming of the Providence, to the laziness, to the neglecting, to the discouragement, to the depression, to the crying at the inappropriate time, to the weeping, to the mourning, to the total crumbling, to the spite, to the jealousy, and all than hang on a disposition that was deprived of the pleasure's occasions. At last, when because of other reasons the pain is mixed into the pleasure, resulting the perverseness (so some people call the union of the contrary parts of the evilness), we give birth to the hypocrisy, to the irony, to the cunningness, to the pretense; the flattery, the desire to be pleasant to the people, and all that are contrivances of this cunning mixture. Because listing them now and naming them all, with their appearances, their modes, their causes and their times, it is not possible. The study of each of them, we will do it, if God will destine power to us, in the future.

### Other Definition of the Evil

So the evil consists, as we told before, in not knowing the good cause of the things. This state, by blinding the human mind, but widely opening the feeling, it totally estranged the

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<sup>50</sup> Selfishness; self-love (E. l. t.'s n.).

man from the knowledge of God and filled him up with the passionate knowledge of the things that fall under the senses. Therefore the man, imparting himself without measure of this only through the senses, like the speechless beasts, and finding out through experience that the impartation of the sensitive ones sustains his bodily and seen nature, he forsook the godlike beauty destined to compose his spiritual adornment and he reckoned the seen creation, as God, deifying it due to the fact that it is necessary for sustaining the body; and the own body, tied through nature on the creations taken as God, he loved it with all his power. And so, through the exclusive care for the body, he served with all the zeal to the Creation instead of the Creator. Because one cannot serve to the creation, if he doesn't cultivate the body, as he cannot serve to God, if he doesn't clean his soul through virtues. So, through the care for the body, the man committing the corruptible ministration, and filling himself against himself of the bodily love for the self, he was having inside himself in a ceaseless work the pleasure and the pain. Because eating always from the tree of the disobedience, he was having in feeling the appearance (of the knowledge) of good and evil<sup>51</sup>, mixed within him.

And maybe in fact, if somebody would say that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the seen creation, he would not deviate from the truth. For the impartation of it, naturally produces the pleasure and the pain.

Or again, the creation of the seen one may have been called tree of the knowledge of the good and of the evil, because it has also spiritual rationalities which nourish the mind, but also a natural power which on one hand delights the feeling, and on the other hand perverts the mind (14). Thus, spiritually contemplated, it offers the knowledge of the good, and taken in a bodily manner, offers the knowledge of the evil. Because to the ones who bodily impart themselves of it, it becomes to them

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<sup>51</sup> The good for the bodily feeling is the pleasure, and the evil it is the pain. This "good" and "evil" are produced by the seen world, which is thus the tree of false "good" and "evil".

teacher of the passions, making them forgetting about the godlike ones. That's why, maybe, God forbids it to the man, postponing for a while the impartation of it, for firstly, as it was right, by knowing the man his own cause through the union with it in grace and transforming, through this communion, the immortality given to him according to the grace, in dispassion and non-changeability, as one who has already become God through deification, to watch without being harmed and totally free, with God, the creatures of God, and to receive their knowledge as god, and not as man, having according to the grace in a wise manner the same knowledge of the things as God has it, due to the transformations of the mind and of the feeling through deification<sup>52</sup>. So must be understood here that tree, according to an interpretation that can be understood by everybody. Because the more secret and the higher meaning it is reserved for the ones who have a mystical cogitation, we having to honor it through silence. I have remembered here about the tree of the disobedience only in passing, wanting to show to you that the not-knowing of God has deified the creation, of which cult comes out from the love for the body (*φιλαυτία*) of the human kind. Because around of this love spins itself, as some sort of mixed knowledge, the whole experience of the pleasure and of the pain, due to which it was introduced in the life of the people the mud of the evil deeds that lasts in a diverse and motley manner and in so much forms that the word cannot name them all. Because each one of them who participate to the human nature has in himself, in a certain

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<sup>52</sup> So, the deification doesn't exclude the knowledge of the creatures. But then, the man knows them without passion, as God and into God, and not with passion, namely with the forgetfulness of God. All the ones have their own time, to know and to be committed rightly, having to wait for the growing up of the man at their height. The tree of the knowledge of the good and of the evil (or the world), as being also planted by God, it was not something bad through itself. But the man was not grown at the state into which he could watch it justly and without danger. So, the interdiction of touching it is was a postponing, and not an eternal interdiction. The same idea is developed by Saint Gregory Palamas in "Natural Heads, Theological, etc.", The Greek Philokalia, volume II, Second Edition, p. 319.

The evil is not identified with the hypostasis of some reality, but it is a wrong way of behaving towards realities, which comes also from an entering of the man in relation with a thing before being grown up to the capacity of a right relation.

quality and quantity, alive and working, the love for his own seen part, namely for the body, which forces him as on a servant, through the lust for pleasure and the fear of pain, to contrive many forms of the passions, after who the times and the things fall together, and according to how his own way of being urges him, because the experience teaches him that it is impossible of having ceaselessly with him the pleasure as companion of life, and to remain totally untouched by pain, that he cannot reach at the end of this purpose. Because the entire nature of the bodies being corrupted and on its way of scattering no matter through how many ways he would try to impede this evolution, he strengthens even more the corruptness from it. That's why the man, fearing, without wanting, ceaselessly, for the fate of what he loves, he cultivates unwillingly and imperceptibly it, through what he loves, that one that he does not love, hanging by the ones that cannot last, and in this way he transforms the disposition of his soul together with the ones that are scattered, as one that rolls down together with the ones that flow, and does not understand that he destroys himself due to the total blindness of the soul towards the truth.

And the deliverance from all this bad things and the short way towards salvation it is the true love, the one from knowledge, of God, and the banishing from the soul of the love for the body and towards this world. Through this, rejecting the lust for pleasure and the fear of pain, we liberate us from the bad bodily love for ourselves (*φιλαυτία*), being lifted up to the knowledge of the Creator. In this way, by receiving instead of the bad love for ourselves, the good and the spiritual one, totally separated from the care for the body, we won't cease to serve God through this good love for ourselves (*νοερά, καλή, αγαθέ*, *φιλαυτία*), seeking always to sustain our soul through God. Because this is the true ministration and through it we take care as it is ought and in a way pleasant to God, of our soul through virtues.

So the one who doesn't want the bodily pleasure and he doesn't fear at all the pain, he has reached to be dispassionate. Because together with these ones and with the bodily love for the self, which it born them, he has killed all the passions that grow up through it and through them, together with the nescience, the first source of all the evil things. And in this way he has made himself servant of the good, that permanently persists and is permanently the same, remaining together with him totally unmoved<sup>53</sup>. So he mirrors with the opened face the glory of God<sup>54</sup>, as one who watches into the light that shines in himself the godlike and unapproachable<sup>55</sup> glory of God.

So, since it was shown to us, by the Word, the right and easy way of the ones who are being saved, let's deny with all the power, all the pleasure and all the pain of the life from here, and let's teach with much urging also the ones that are obeyed to us to do this. For, by doing this, we are saved, and we consummately have also delivered others from all the contrivance of the passions and from all the evilness of the devils. Let's embrace only the love and nobody will separate us from the love of God, neither trouble, nor tribulation, neither sword, nor all the things listed by the Apostle in that place<sup>56</sup>. For through the knowledge with the work remaining us into the unmoved love, we will receive from Him an eternal and unspoken joy and sustaining of the soul. And by imparting ourselves from this one, we will have towards the world the

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<sup>53</sup> In the same sense also Saint Gregory of Nyssa understands the fixation and the not-changeability of the man in that life according to God, without being excluded the possibility of advancing into God.

<sup>54</sup> II Corinthians: 3: 18: KJB: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."; ROB: "And we all, looking at as in a mirror, with the unveiled face, the glory of God, we are transformed in the same way from glory to glory, as from the Ghost of the Lord".

<sup>55</sup> Without having somebody the godlike light (the good, the love, God) in himself, he cannot see either outside himself.

<sup>56</sup> Romans: 8: 35: KJB: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"; ROB: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? The trouble, or the tribulation, or the persecution, or the famine, or the lack of clothing, or the danger, or the sword?"

savior nescience<sup>57</sup>, not looking anymore as before, without undefiled thought, with the unveiled face of the feeling, at the surface of the sensitive ones as to a slave, but rather mirroring with the unveiled face of the cogitation (mind), after the removal of any sensitive veil, that glory of God shown into virtues and into the spiritual knowledge<sup>58</sup>, through which we receive that union according to the grace. For as ignoring God, we have deified the creation, which we has known it through the feeling, tasting from it, for the fact that through it our body was being sustained, so by receiving the lived knowledge of God, that one accessible to the understanding, we will ignore the experience of the entire feeling, for the fact that He sustains our soul to exist and to be happy.

### **Foreword to the Scholia Placed After the Answers**

The natural adornment of the rational ones it is the rationality. The adornment of the rationality it is the understanding. The adornment of the understanding is the habituation and the aptitude, which is manifested through the virtue crossed through by the rationality, the rational ones. The adornment of this habituation is the contemplation without mistake, through which the true knowledge is achieved. And the end of this one is the wisdom, which is the truest fulfillment of the understanding. Because this is the rationality which has become perfect according to the nature, or the clean mind, which through union with its cause has entered into an above understanding relation, due to which, resting from the natural and divers movement and relation with the ones from after the cause, insists in it only in an not-understood way. Arrived here,

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<sup>57</sup> Besides that nescience from above knowledge, of God, there is another savior nescience. It is that one which doesn't notice anymore the possibility of the passionate side of the things. For this one the world has irremediably become a transparent of the godlike glory, after its glory has been "torn", or its opaque surface, built by its gaze exclusively through the feeling.

<sup>58</sup> The unveiled face of the feeling it is the unimpeded gaze by the spiritual considerations and unashamed of the exclusive feeling, which sees only the sensitive aspect of the world, only the material veils. And as much the face of the feeling is unveiled or rejected, so much the unveiled face of the mind appears, and the veils of the world are removed.

the mind enjoys the unspoken rest of the happiest and above understanding silence that cannot be unveiled by any word and by any understanding, but only the experience through participation of the ones who have been found worthy of its above understanding possession and tasting. And the feeling of this, easy to be known and evident to everybody, it is the dispassion and the total distance of the soul's disposition towards this century.

So, nothing is more proper according to the nature, to the rational ones, than the rationality, neither more fitted for the ones who love God, for showing their right faith, but its studying and its understanding. This logos which we have spoken about, it isn't the luxuriously adorned word in a crafted utterance which is pleasant to the hearing, with which also the perverse men can habituate themselves, but the rationality which the nature has it existentially hidden inside itself, without any teaching, for researching the things and for exposing the truth in words<sup>59</sup>. On this one also the Holy Ghost uses to associate it to Himself, shaped through virtues, and to make it godlike statue of that beauty according to the likeness, nothing lacking to it according to the grace from the characteristics that naturally fall to the Godhead. For it is an organ, which skillfully gathers the whole unveiling of the goodness of God, that intelligibly shines into creatures. And by noticing in this way the greatness of the things, elevates towards their maker cause on the ones who have totally made their entire impulse, of the desire that is in them according to the nature, to be passed by Him through, not being they anymore retained by anything from the ones that are after the cause.

By cultivating this ones, we that are enslaved by all the contrary to the nature ones, we will prove ourselves the doers of all the godlike virtues, namely we will reject through all the good, the earthly ugliness from the soul, for receiving the

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<sup>59</sup> We have here the Greek term for rationality and for word. The rationality is an interior word. About this thing it is about in whole this foreword.

spiritual beauty. For where the rationality reigns, there ceases the reigning of the feeling, into which there is mixed the power of the sin; which, by deceiving the soul with the mercy for the related according to the hypostasis body, attracts to itself the body through the pleasure. For its natural thing being the passionate and voluptuous care for the body, it deviates the soul from the life according to the nature and convinces the soul to become doer of the without hypostasis sin (own support). Because the evilness is a deed of the understanding soul, namely the forgetfulness of the goodness of the according to the nature ones, which is born from the passionate affection for towards the body and world. This one is destroyed by the rationality through its strategy, by scrutinizing with spiritual science the origin and the nature of the world and of the body and pushing the soul towards the related country of the intelligible ones, against which the law of the sin has not any power. Because it has not anymore the feeling on which to cross as on a bridge towards the mind, because the soul does not have anymore any affectionate connection with it, because the soul has deserted it together with the sensible views, of which relation and nature, the mind, by leaving them behind, does not feel them anymore.

By knowing this, as I said, I have reckoned that I must give the present word of this writing, as some help, the scholia placed at the end of the answers, for making whole and to beautify their meaning, and to make sweeter for the readers the nourishment of the ideas from it, and in general, more sure the understanding of the entire cogitation contained into this writing. Because, by re-reading after the publication the entire work, I have found that some places need clarification, others need addings and ascertainment, and again others need a conclusion to the published text. Therefore I have composed this writing of scholia, giving to every place the due clarification. That's why I pray to all the readers, or even to the ones who will copy it, to read and to add also the corresponding

scholium to the note of each place, for the word being in every aspect not diminished by any mistake.

### Scholia

1. The body, he says, expresses through the seen manners, the virtuous disposition of the soul, being an organ united with the soul towards its manifestation.

2. The feeling sends, he says, to the mind the image (the representation) of the seen ones, towards the understanding of the rationalities from the things, as an organ which serves to the mind to pass towards the intelligible ones.

3. Proper to the mind is, he says, to show in the ones who have a single tendency of the will.

4. The mind, crossing beyond the nature of the things, becomes not-understanding (*áνόητος*), getting into contact with God, Who is above all being, knowledge and understanding.

5. The Word of God shares His gifts making these gifts diverse in the ones who receive them, according to the disposition of their souls.

6. The devils wage the unseen wars with our mind as there would be present the matters.

7. For pleasure we love the passions, and for pain we flee away from virtues.

8. As the rationality mastering upon the passions makes the feelings organ of the virtue, so the passions mastering upon the rationality, shape the feelings towards sin.

9. Namely of the sensitive ones.

10. The soul uniting himself with God through habituation, after the deliverance from the natural affection (relation) towards things, he receives the unmoved firmness into good.

11. Existences he calls the beings of the things. And apparent existences he calls the flowing and the draining which change the quality and the quantity of a thing, and give birth to the fiction of the feeling which drives to the sin.

12. The man being in the middle between God and matter, through the fact that he has not moved himself towards God as towards the cause and the purpose of his creation, but towards the matter, he has ignored God, making his mind earthly by tilting it downwards towards the matter.

13. Composed knowledge has called the experience of the sensitive ones through the feeling, which contains in it through the nature the pleasure for what is born and the pain for what is decayed.

14. The creation of the seen ones contains, he says, both spiritual rationalities for the mind, and also a natural power for the feeling. Their meanings are as a tree in the middle of the heart, which is the Paradise in a utopian sense.

15. Somebody ignores the experience of the pleasure and of the pain from the feeling when he ties his mind on God, after he has become free from the bodily affection.

Because God has made you so good to command me to write and to send to you those obscure places that I had them marked, I have put firstly the ones that have seemed to me more necessary.

### **Question number 1**

*The affects (the passions) are they evil through themselves, or due to a wrong usage? I speak about pleasure and sadness, about desire and fear, and those resulting from these ones.*

### **Answer**

These affects as also the other ones, they were not created from the beginning together with the human nature. Otherwise they would enter into the definition of the nature. I say, learning from the Great Gregory of Nyssa, that they spring

up into the nature, after they have penetrated in the least rational part of the nature, due to its falling down from the state of perfection. Through them, instead of the godlike and happy image, immediately after the transgression of the sin, there was made into the man transparent and evident the resemblance with the speechless beasts. Because it was necessary, after the dignity of the rationality was covered, that the nature of the people to be tormented rightly by the characteristics of the irrationality (beastliness) to which it was willingly attracted, God has most wisely ordered, that the man to come in this way to the knowledge of his greatness of rational being.

Nevertheless also the affects become good in the ones who strive themselves, namely when, wisely detaching these affects from the bodily things, they use them towards gaining the heavenly goods. For instance: they can transform the lust in a spiritual longing for the godlike ones (1); the pleasure, in the pure joy for the willing collaboration of the mind with the godlike gifts; the fear, in the care for avoiding the future damnation consequent to the sins; and the sadness, the repentance which brings even from the present time the straightening after the sin. And shortly speaking, like the physicians who heal through the venomous body of the viper a venomous bite or which will become poisoned, let's use also these affects towards the removal of the present evilness or of the one to be, and towards achieving and guarding of the virtue and of the knowledge. As I said so, these ones become good through usage into the ones who enslave any of their thought towards the obedience to Christ<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> The affects are considerate according to Saint Maximos as irrational characteristics penetrated into the nature of the man after the falling into the sin and getting him close to the animalism, because the animals also react irrationally through these affects to what they see. Through them the body is quickly set in movement towards everything appears to the man as worthy of being craved for, as also quickly retires from before the dangerous ones. In the primordial state, the man guided his life totally rational. The body did not escape, through anarchical and disorderly movement from under the control of the rationality and of the will. Now, even in the state of rebirth, these affects cannot be anymore removed from the nature. But they can be used towards a good purpose. The clean and rational thoughts would not be

And if the Scripture speaks about such an affect at God and at the saints (2), it does it in what concerns God for our understanding, expressing through our affects the savior and benefactor deeds of the Providence; and in what concerns the saints, because their spiritual reports with God and their dispositions cannot be expressed through human speech, without the known affects of the nature (3).

### Scholia

1. How and when these affects become good.
2. The Scripture describes the different reports of the Providence with us through the affects known by us.
3. The Scripture marks through these names the quality of the saints' reports with God.

### Questions number 2

*If all the species, by which the world is composed, God made them in only six days, what does the Father work after? Because the Lord says: "My Father work until now, and I am*

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able to easily move our body, which has ended under the power of these rational but very dynamic factors, towards the targets fixed by them. That's why he tries to gain for these target the affects, for through their impulse to easily move the body through them. It is known that the theoretical idea has not so much effect in what concerns the transformation of the man, until the idea does not gain the feeling of the man in its favor. The way from the idea to the good decision leads through the sentiment. This is called Vișeslavțev (in Russian language, this author's name, here spelled in Romanian language, it would be spelled as: Вышевлавцев (E. l. t.'s n.)) calls "the sublimation of the affects", into which he attributes a big role to the imagination ((Etica preobrajenago erosu) (The ethics of the transfigured eros (the first parentheses contain the phonetic translation of the Russian words; E. l. t.'s n.)). This is also the way in which the faith becomes a transforming power of the men. It converts the affects towards other targets, towards God. A faith that does not bring this kind of fruits, which to extend upon the whole man, it is something unconceivable and I wonder how it can be sustained by the Protestants. God is without affects. Also the angels are pure minds ( $\nu\circ\epsilon\zeta$ ). This will be also our part in the future life. Because Saint Maximos says: "The affects that preserve the nature in the life from here cannot move together with us to the immortal and eternal life" (Answer 55).

*working<sup>61</sup>. Is not here about the conservation of the created species?*

### **Answer**

God, finishing the creation of the prime rationalities and the universal essences of the things, He still work until today, not only by sustaining these ones in existence, but also bringing in actuality, developing and constituting the part virtually given into essences (1); then by assimilating through Providence the particular ones with the universal essences, until, using the more general rationality of the rational being, or by the movement of the particular ones towards happiness, He will unite the spontaneous impulses of everybody. In this way He will make all of them to move harmoniously and identically together, the particular ones not having anymore a different will from the general ones, but one and the same rationality being seen divide in all of them according to the ways of being of the ones which are attributed to the sort (2). Through this one it will be shown in full work the grace which deifies all. It is the work about which God and the Word Himself, Who made Himself man for it, says: "My Father until now He works; and I work"<sup>62</sup>. The first One, namely, He deigns, the second One works Himself, and the Holy Ghost existentially makes whole the benevolence of the Father concerning everything and the work of the Son, to be through all and in all, the good God in Trinity, according to everyone from the ones worthy according to the grace; and to be seen in everything as exists, in a natural way, the soul in the entire body and in every limb of it, without diminution<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> John: 5: 17: KJB: "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."; ROB: "But Jesus answered them: My Father until now He works; and I work".

<sup>62</sup> Ibid the anterior note.

<sup>63</sup> Maurice Blondel, L'Action, volume II, Paris, Alcan, 1936, says in another form the same thing: "Because all hangs on all, that the Universe is in a continuous growth, that the relative fixity of the being comports a development of which multiple phases cannot be, without bad consequences, isolated ones from the others" (p 326). The work about which Saint Maximos

## Scholia

1. Into the matter, namely into the general being of the things, there potentially exist the singular exemplars, which come one by one from matter, and of which apparition is worked by God.

2. The assimilation of the singular ones with the general ones, it is the union of all people, through only one movement of the will, with the rationality of the nature. This union is brought to accomplishment by God through the Providence, as in everybody there is only one nature, in the same way to be formed only one leaning of the will, everybody being united with God, and between them, through the Ghost.

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speaks here it is the universal action, a unitary one, which, after Blondel, it is beyond the phenomenal deeds, having the source in the primary cause. As Maximos in this answer, Blondel also sees a “universal independence” and the “human perspectives” from the world, unlike the “the hypotheses which stabilize the things in closed cycles within which all things would stay juxtaposed in separate compartments” (p. 327). If the creation is an exclusive act of God, the development of the created Universe, through the work of the Divine Providence, it engages also the cooperation of the creatures which, collaborating with the primary cause, they reciprocally cause and influence themselves.

We especially draw the attention on the fact that Saint Maximos admits: a) “a more general rationality of the rational being”, from where it follows that there are also more particular rationalities; and b) “a different will of the particular ones”, from where it follows that there is also a more general will. This idea we find it again developed at Blondel (L’Action, volume II). According to him, any tendency from within us it has a rationality, due to which comes out its appearance of rightness. This particular rationality, by attracting the will towards its side, this one becomes the will of a part from us, instead of being the will of the whole from us. So the normal deed is not going to suppress the various tendencies from within us, but to subordinate them to the whole or to harmonize them. The more general rationality is like a pyramid top towards the particular rationalities. The most general rationality of our being seeks to subordinate itself to a higher general rationality which embraces more beings and things, and the most general rationality if the Divine Logos. But working in conformity with the more general rationality from within our being, we satisfy, in the same time, the true interests and aspirations of the parts from us. Because by satisfying the anarchical tendencies, we disintegrate the organic whole and we throw it into a tormented existence.

It is to be noted that according to Saint Maximos this work conform to the more general rationality, or the union of the will with this rationality of the nature, it meets the work of the grace from within us. (See also the interpretation to the Lord’s Prayer). Towards grace and towards deification we elevate ourselves through the raising towards the normal state of the nature, towards the activity conform to the ever more general rationality of it. There exist a harmony between rationality and grace.

### Question number 3

*Who is that one about whom the Gospel says that he carries in the city the pitcher of water and who being met by the disciples sent by Jesus, they receive the commandment to follow him<sup>64</sup>? And then who is the master of house? And why his name is not told by the Evangelists? And what is, finally, the big and paved upper room, into which the fearsome mystery of the Last Supper is being done<sup>65</sup>?*

### Answer

The Scripture leaves unnoticed the name of the man whom the Savior sent the two disciples for preparing the Passover, as also the name of the city in which they were sent. According to the first thought that comes to me, I reckon that through the “city” it is shown this sensitive world and the “man” is the general nature of the human beings. To these ones are sent the two disciples, as disciples of God and of the Word, as forerunners and organizers of the mysterious feast which God had together with the nature of the humans, the First Testament and the New One. The first one cleans the human nature of all defilement, through the practical philosophy (the working wisdom); the other one elevates the mind through knowledge or through the mysterious guiding of the contemplation, from the bodily ones towards the visions related with it of the spiritual ones<sup>66</sup>. And a proof about this is the fact

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<sup>64</sup> Mark: 14: 13: KJB: “And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.”; ROB: “And He sent two of His disciples, saying them: Go in the city and you will be met by a man carrying a pitcher of water; go after him”.

<sup>65</sup> Luke: 22: 10: KJB: “And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.”; ROB: “And He said to them: Behold, when you will enter into the city, you will be met by a man carrying a pitcher of water; go after him in the house in which he will enter.”

<sup>66</sup> Here the spiritual ascension is divided in two stairs: a) the doing, b) the contemplation. To the first one it corresponds the Old Testament, to the second one the New Testament. The

that the sent disciples are Peter and John. Because Peter is the symbol of the deed and John is of the contemplation.

So it is very appropriate that the first one who encounters the disciples to be a pitcher carrier, meaning through himself all the ones who bear, through the practical philosophy, on the virtues' shoulders, closed into the mortified earthly limbs of the body, as into a pitcher, the grace of the Ghost, which cleans them of defilement through faith. After this one, the second one who meets them is the master of the house, who shows them the paved upper room. This one shows through himself all the ones who pave through contemplation the height of their clean and great contemplation, as an upper room, with cogitations and dogmas achieved through knowledge (in a gnostic way), towards the receiving, as it is due, the Great Word. And the house is the habituation into godliness, towards which the practical mind advances by cultivating the virtue. Upon it (upon the accustoming into godliness) reigns, as one which is master through nature, the mind<sup>67</sup> enlightened by the godlike light of the mysterious knowledge, which has been found worthy, together with the practical mind, of the above nature together feasting with the Word and Savior.

It is spoken into Scripture either of a man or of two men, if one is the carries of the pitcher and the other one is the master of the house. About one it is spoken, as I said, due to only one nature, and about two, because this nature is divided between the active and the contemplative ones. These ones, being again mixed by the Word, through the Ghost<sup>68</sup>, He names them and makes them one.

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symbol of the first stair is Peter, and of the second one is John. To the first one it corresponds the man with the pitcher and to the second one the master of the house, or the practical mind and the contemplative mind.

<sup>67</sup> The mind in Greek language is of male gender (*νοῦς*). Therefore it is "master". (The author makes this ascertainment because both the Greek and the Romanian languages use the grammatical agreement of the substantive "master" in gender. In English language we have "master" and "proprietress" (E. l. t. 's n.)).

<sup>68</sup> Matthew: 26: 18: KJB: "And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.";

And if somebody wants to apply the said ones to every human being, he would not get out of truth. Because the “thirsty” is the soul of everyone, to whom are always sent, as disciples of the Word and of God, the advices of the virtue and the rationalities (words) of the knowledge. The ones who carries the pitcher with water it is the way of living and the thought which sustains, in an unflinching way, on the shoulders of the restraint, not-evaporated, the grace of the faith, given by the Baptism. And the house is the virtuous disposition and habit, built from many and diverse virtues and strong manly cogitations, as of some stones. The upper room is the wide and extended cogitation, and the capacity of knowledge adorned with godlike views of the mysterious and unspoken dogmas. And the master has the mind widened by the shininess of the habituation into virtue, by the height, by the beauty and by the greatness of the knowledge. At this mind coming the Word with His disciples, namely with the first spiritual meanings of the nature and of the time (1), He imparts Himself.

At last, the Passover is the passing of the Word towards the human mind, through which He gives to all the worthy ones, the plenitude of His goods, Himself Word of God mysteriously coming to them.

### Scholium

1. In which He appears to be hidden. Because from the ones that are, we know the Maker of the ones that are, as being proper-said the rationalities of the ones that have been made. And the time and the nature are the ones under which there are the ones that are under time and under nature and everything that is created, cogitated and felt. With these ones God and Word comes to the worthy ones. Because from the

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ROB: “And He said: Go in the city, to such man, and tell him: the Master says: My Time in nigh; at you I want to do the Passover with My disciples”.

ones that are around Him is known Him, and through them He gives Himself whole, conforming Himself with the power of receiving of each one. And through the spiritual meanings of the time and of the nature indicates their rationalities, learned from matter and shape, or from body and world, for knowing through them the One Who made Himself these ones for us.

#### **Question number 4**

*How the Lord commanded to the disciples to not have two shirts<sup>69</sup>, He Himself having five, according to John the evangelist<sup>70</sup>, as one can see from the ones who divided them; and which are these clothes?*

#### **Answer**

The Savior did not have five shirts, but only one and the covering over that one. From these ones, the one from bellow is called *xitoviov<sup>71</sup>* (jacket), and the covering from outside *ματιον<sup>72</sup>* (toga, or pallium<sup>73</sup>).

But through the terms of the story John the evangelist has mysteriously shown a hidden meaning, detached through a contemplative knowledge. For he aimed to lead us, through the

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<sup>69</sup> Matthew: 10: 10: KJB: “Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.”; ROB: “Nor scrip for the trip, neither two coats, nor shoes, neither staff; for worthy is the worker of his food”. // Luke: 9 : 3: KJB: “And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.”; ROB: “And He said towards them: Do not take anything for the trip, neither staff, nor scrip, neither bread, nor money and do not have two coats.”

<sup>70</sup> John: 19: 23: KJB: “Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.”; ROB: “After crucified Jesus, the soldiers took His clothes and made four parts, to each soldier one part, and the shirt. But the shirt was without seam, woven entirely from top.”

<sup>71</sup> Greek language (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>72</sup> Greek language (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>73</sup> Latin language (E. l. t.'s n.).

things he told, throughout the spiritual truths. The shirt of the Savior, woven from top to bottom as a whole, even though they were allowed to undress Him of it, it is the connection and the undivided weaving of the virtues together; or our cogitation, fitted and adequate to the Word (to the rationality); or the grace of the new man, of the one in the likeness of Christ, woven from above through the Holy Ghost. And the outer covering is the sensitive world, divided in four elements, which they tear it apart, as the shirt of Jesus, in four parts, the ones who naturally crucify the Lord in us.

So the devils tear apart the seen creation of the four elements, determining us to see it in a passionate way and to ignore the divine rationalities from within it. But it is something else with the shirt of the virtues, because even they pluck this one out of us, after our laziness towards the good ones, they still cannot to convince us that the virtue is a vice. Let's not make therefore the five cloth of Jesus occasion for greediness, but let's know which the intention of the Scripture is, and how the Lord is crucified and is undressed within us, who are lazy towards the good ones, just because this laziness in working the virtues; also how the devils share His creation as on a coat, for making us to serve to the passions. Let's become trustful guardians of the goods destined to us by God and let's look as it is due to the creation, only towards His glory<sup>74</sup>. At last, let's preserve not-stolen the shirt of the word (rationality) of the knowledge, namely the virtues, through the sedulousness towards the good deeds.

And if you want to understand through the shirt woven from above, besides the said ones, the world of the bodiless and spiritual beings, and through the outer cover, which the Scripture had divide in four parts, as in four elements, the

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<sup>74</sup> When we become lazy in working the commandments, Christ is crucified inside us, but they undress Him, before, of the unitary shirt of the virtues. For in the eyes of the ones, inside whom Christ has been crucified, the world is not contemplated anymore as a unitary vestment which clothes the solidary system of the divine rationalities, so, in the last analyze, the supreme Rationality from which irradiate those, but as a juxtaposition of matter meant to satisfy the lusts.

bodily nature, you will not be wrong to the truth. From among these ones, they scattered the body through corruption, taking power upon us from the transgression of the commandment. But they didn't tear the soul apart, the soul having kinship with the ones from above<sup>75</sup>.

### **Question number 5**

*What is the land cursed by God in the deeds of Adam, according to the more hidden meaning<sup>76</sup>, and what does it mean to nourish the man himself from it in troubles? What does it mean then to bring that one to the man thorns and brambles, and the man to eat the grass of the field? What does it mean, at last, to eat the bread into the sweating of his forehead? Because never has been seen a man eating either earth, or grass. Neither the ones who eat the bread do eat it with the sweating of their forehead, as it is said in that story<sup>77</sup>.*

### **Answer**

The cursed earth in Adam's deeds is the Adam's body, ceaselessly cursed through his deeds, namely through the

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<sup>75</sup> The soul is the shirt that cannot be divided. The body is the garment divided in component elements (four in number, according to the belief of the old ones) as consequence of the sin.

<sup>76</sup> In Greek language it is said *κατά αναγογία* (through anagogy: the anagogy is the interpretation of the Bible which raises from the literary sense of the text to the mystical one (E. l. t.'s n.)). Mister professor PhD Iustin Moisescu (The Holy Scripture and its interpretation in the work of Saint John Chrysostom, Chernovtsy, 1942, p. 98-102) he translates: anagogic sense, which he considers as one of the four senses in which the Holy Scripture can be interpreted: literary, anagogical, allegorical and typical. About this anagogical sense he says that does not suppress the literary one, but it completes it by adding a higher idea. This fact distinguishes it from the allegorical one. The anagogical interpretation is for instance the one which, without suppressing the truth about the two vestments of the Savior, sees in them a higher meaning. The allegorical interpretation is the one which, considering for instance that king Ishboseth could not have as guardian to the door a women (II Kings: 4: 1), sees in this episode only the misfortune that comes upon the mind when it is guarded only by the feeling (see the word of Nilus the Ascetic, chapter XVI, The Romanian Philokalia, volume I, p. 167; G. P. 79, 740). The most interpretations of the Saint Maximos are anagogical and very few are allegorical.

<sup>77</sup> Genesis: 3: 17 and the followings.

passions of the stuck to the earth mind, to the fruitlessness of the virtues, the virtues being deeds of God<sup>78</sup>. From his body the man feeds himself with pain and with much sadness, enjoying only the little sweetness that his body gives it to him. Out of the body, spring the man, the worries and the thoughts, as thorns, and the great temptations and dangers, as brambles. And these ones prick him from all sides through rationality, lust and through anger (wrath), than he barely can take care and can eat, namely to maintain the health and the welfare of the body, as a grass that withers itself. But also this one through a long repetition of pains, "in the sweat of the forehead", namely into the toil and labor of the senses, which force themselves to explore, full of curiosity, the sensitive things. And the endeavor to sustain its life from here, either through a craftsmanship, or through another skilful method, it is as a bread to the man.

Or maybe even better, the earth, which is the heart of Adam<sup>79</sup>, that it has been cursed for the transgression of the commandment, with the loss of the heavenly goods. This earth (the heart) the man eats it into many troubles through the working wisdom (practical philosophy) cleaning him from the curse of the conscience for the acts of dishonesty. (1) In the same time he cleans with the rationality the thought regarding the birth of the bodies, thoughts which spring out of the heart as some thorns, as also the frowning thought regarding the taking care and the judgment of the souls, which also spring out from the heart as some brambles, while the spiritual contemplation he reaps it quite as a natural grass. And thus, as through a sweat of the forehead, he eats through the inquiring toil of the cogitation, when he reached at the cogitation, the incorruptible bread of the knowledge of God, which is the only one bread of the life and the only one which sustains into incorruptibility the being of the ones who eat it.

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<sup>78</sup> The passions are "the deeds of the man", in the sense that they aren't born by the power of God. The virtues are the deeds of God, because they are born by the power of God.

<sup>79</sup> In Greek language the earth and the body and the heart (*γη, σάρξ, καρδία*) are of feminine gender, so it is possible to say about the earth that it is both body and heart.

Therefore, the eaten earth in good meaning it is the heart cleaned through deeds; and the grass is the science of the things coming from the natural contemplation<sup>80</sup>. At last, the bread is the mysterious and true conscience of the godlike works<sup>81</sup>.

### Scholium

1. The Adam's deed are the dishonorable passions<sup>82</sup>. For the virtues are worked by God alone, in the ones who want this. From the ones who want only the intention is required, being used by them as a tool, for bringing the virtues to the light.

### Question number 6

*If, according to Saint John: “The one who is born from God does not commit sin, because His seed remains into him and he cannot commit sin<sup>83</sup>, and the one born from water and ghost is born from God, how can we the ones born from God through Baptism, can commit sin?*

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<sup>80</sup> The natural contemplation is a contemplation helped by the grace. It is named natural because sees God (the divine rationalities) through nature.

<sup>81</sup> Again the three steps of the spiritual ascension: the eating of the earth (the cleaning of the body through virtues), the eating of the grass (the contemplation of the nature), and the eating of the bread (the seeing of God).

<sup>82</sup> Romans: 1: 26: KJB: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.”; ROB: “Therefore, God gave them to some reproachable passions, because and their women changed the natural order with the one against nature;”

<sup>83</sup> I John: 3: 9: KJB: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”; ROB: “Whosoever is born from God does not commit sin, because the seed of God remains in this one; and he cannot sin, because he is born from God”.

## Answer

The way of our birth from God is twofold: one gives to the born ones the grace of the adoption, to have it present as potency; the other one gives them to have the entire grace in work, to transform and to shape the leaning of the will of the one born from God, than to freely tend towards the One Who gave him birth (1). The first way it has, only through faith, the grace as potency (2); the other one it plants besides faith also the all-godlike likeness with God, likeness which works accompanied by knowledge in the one who knows (3). The ones in whom the first way of the birth is, not having yet the leaning of the will<sup>84</sup> fully satisfied by the bodily impulses, and that's why not being entirely crossed through by the Ghost, to impart themselves in a natural way from the mysteries known in a godlike way, it is not excluded to lean towards sin if they want. Because the Ghost does not give birth to a forced leaning of the will, but the wanted one He shapes it to deification. And the one who has known this through experience cannot fall down from what he has once truly and proper known by living, towards something else. As neither the eye, which once saw the sun cannot deceive itself with the moon, or with other stars from the sky. Otherwise is however with the ones who have imparted themselves from the second way of the birth. The Holy Ghost conquering the whole leaning of their will, He has totally moved it from earth to the heaven, and through the true and lived knowledge He has transformed their mind, crossing it with the happy rays of God and Father, than to be reckoned as another god, who suffers through grace states that have become a habituation to him, what God does not suffer, but is according to the being. But through this one the leaning of the will has become free of sin, gaining through habituation the aptitude of the virtue and of the knowledge and not being able anymore of

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<sup>84</sup> In whole this chapter Saint Maximos uses the term *γνώμη* or *προαιρεσ* and not *θέλησ*, which is a will that has decided himself in some way, and not the will as abstract possibility. (*γνώμη* = opinion; *προαιρεσ* = option; *θέλησ* = will (E. l. t.'s n.)).

denying what they have known through the experience with the work. Consequently, even though we have the Ghost of the adoption, which is the seed that makes the born ones, according to the likeness with the One Who sows, we do not though surrender to Him the pleasure of our will cleaned of the inclination and of the affection towards any other thing; this is the reason for which still after we are born from water and Ghost we commit sin with the will. But is we prepare our will to receive through knowledge (*γνωστικως*)<sup>85</sup> both the work of the water and of the Ghost, then the mysterious water commits through the deeds the cleaning of the conscience, and the life doer Ghost produces into us the consummation of the not-changeability in good, through the knowledge from experience. It remains so on the account of each of us, who can still commit sin, to want to totally surrender ourselves with the inclination of our will to the Ghost<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> Gnostically (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>86</sup> This theme is treated according to Mark the Ascetic, About Baptism, G. P. 65, 985-1028 (The Romanian Philokalia, volume I). If we connect this answer with the answer number 15, in which it is shown that in a larger sense in each man there potentially is a gift of the Holy Ghost, the whole problem is put in an universal light by the considerations made by Blondel (cited work) related to the question about how can God, who is the source of the entire power and of the entire activity, to cede from this power and from this activity also to His creatures, without those being like some automated machines, but in the same time without Him ceasing to be the source and the master of their free activity? "How can God grant to us His power and His light and to make it our own, without being to be His own, in such a way that He wants and to make free the ones to whom, though, He remains their master, source and judge? And this one is without suppressing the free will and the fair responsibility of the human agent? A first condition seems to be necessary for this maneuver to be possible and to succeed. It consists in the subconscious preparations and in partial clarities or equivocal at the beginning, from which, are born the options to be done and the decisions to be made, for the imperfect agents, of whom contingency and implications imply a possibility of mistake and a relative infirmity. God does not communicate at once His constraining evidence and His immediate work, because it would be not only a metaphysical impossibility, but it would in the same time be ruinous for the plan of His kindness, which tends to incite to work true and active beings and not extras. Thus for existing causes to be in the same time second and initiators, it ought that their action to take its roots from obscure states and to develop itself across the shadow of and ascension towards a intellectual and moral order which to give place to the work of the cogitation, to the appeals of the conscience, and to the rational and voluntary choice". "If God gives Himself to the spirits by hiding Himself under the covering of the physical greatnesses or of the obscurities of the unconscious, that is for making Himself sought, it is for making Himself found by the ones whom He stimulates from outside, through unrest and desire, through trials and certitudes, through this whole pedagogy

## Scholia

1. The answer is very appropriate also for the ones who inquire if Adam was created mortal or immortal.

2. The not-working faith has, he says, the grace of the adoption in potency, as one which is not put in movement by the ones who have it, by fulfilling the commandments.

3. There are shown two ways of the birth. The first one is the one according to the being, so to speak, which is of the whole man. Through this thing He sows into the being the consummation of the adoption in potency. The second one is the one according to the good pleasure and according to the will's decision. Through this, the Holy Ghost taking the option and the decision of the will, He shapes it to the deification, uniting it whole with God. The first way of the birth lets the possibility that the born ones to incline towards the sin, if they do not want to translate in deed the potency of the adoption sown into them, being addicted to the bodily ones. Because the one that uses this thing is the decision of the will. The potency of the adoption is like a tool which remains unused if the will does not decide to use it. According to this way of birth it is

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of the nature and of the soul: advances and withdrawals which compose our state of debtors towards the Creator Who aims to make us gaining what He has put at the beginning to our disposition, for this acquisition to permit us to transform this thing in a gift (de transformer se prêt en don (for transforming this loan in donation (E. l. t.'s n.))). "Without doubt it can seem strange, for the divine action, to veil itself, to limits itself thus, and to suspend its shininess and its power, for offering itself under the features of some partial truths, of some occasional and particular goods, "in front of which our conscience and our free will have to bring judgments and to make decisions. But it is not this the only one and the true mean for the finite and imperfect spirit to put something from itself, to accept the light and the kindness instead of refuse them, of using what we call «le prêt divine» for turning it back fructified and for receiving it as a gift?" (p. 200-202). "Our spiritual aspiration is not born through some sort of spontaneous generation. It has roots downwards in the entire universal and of the life movement, which it is already a divine advance made with the goal of preparing the apparition of the spirits; it has roots upwards in the infusion of the divine transcendence, which lightens the spirit and it is given for making itself sought along the insufficiencies themselves of the immanent and contingent order" (p. 420). We can say that what is the natural man it is the aspiration towards the high ones, this is the tendency in the baptized man. An initial gift, which drives the man upwards, as a stimulant, as a dynamic germ, towards the development of the gift from within him, towards his transformation from an object of a undeveloped knowledge into an object of a more and more explicit knowledge, for his growth into God or of God into him. The trials have also a role in this ascension.

possible that the born ones to commit sin. But according to the second one, it is impossible, once the inclination of the will and the decision are deified. So, this way of birth is in the view of the Apostle when he says: “the one born from God does not commit sin”.

### **Question number 7**

*What does it mean: “Towards this one even to the dead ones it has been preached, to be judged with the body according to the man and to live with the ghost according to God”?<sup>87</sup> How are the dead ones judged with the body?*

### **Answer**

It is the custom of the Scripture to change the times and to replace each other, so that the future to show it as past and the past as future, and in present to express the time from before or from after the present. This thing is limpid for the ones accustomed with the Scripture.

Some ones say, therefore, that the Scripture calls “dead” here the people that have become consummated before the coming of Christ, as for instance the ones from the time of the flood, the ones from the time of the erection of the tower, the ones from Sodom, the ones from Egypt and the other ones, who in different times and ways they received the damnation in many manners and the afflictions of the judgment of God. These ones received their damnation not for the cause that they did not know God, but because of the evil deeds that they did to each other. To them it was preached, he says, the great news of

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<sup>87</sup> I Peter: 4: 6: KJB: “For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”; ROB: “For towards this one it was preached to the dead ones, to be judged as men, according to the body, but to live, according to God, with the ghost.”

the salvation, after they were judged once in body according to the man, namely after they received the damnation for the evil deeds that they did to each other in the life from the body, “to live according to God with the ghost”, namely with the soul. In this purpose they received, even being in hell, the sermon of the knowledge of God, being given the fact that the Savior descended to hell, to save also the dead ones who believed. Therefore, to understand this place, we’ll give to it the following shape: “and to the dead ones was preached, who were once judged with the body according to the man, to live with the ghost according to God”.

Or again, he maybe calls “dead ones” in secret meaning, the ones who bear in their body the seal of the death of Christ, to whom it has been truly given the godlike Gospel through deeds, if the Gospel seeds the renouncement to the bodily life and the confession of the spiritual one. These ones are the ones who ceaselessly die according to the man, namely in what concerns the human life with the body in this eon, and they live only with the ghost according to God, likewise the godlike Apostle, and according to the ones like him. These are the ones who do not live anymore their own life, but they have Christ living into them only according to the soul. Thus, the ones who have made themselves, for God, dead towards this eon, they are judged with the body, having to endure tribulations, denigrations, troubles and many persecutions, and joyfully suffering countless sorts of trials.

### Question number 8

*Saint John says: “God is light”<sup>88</sup>, but after that he adds: “if we walk into light, like He Himself is in light”<sup>89</sup>. In what*

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<sup>88</sup> I John: 1: 5: KJB: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”; ROB: “And this is the announcement that we heard it from Him and which we announce it to you: that God is light and there is no darkness into Him.”

*meaning says the same one: “He is in light”, like something in something else?*

### **Answer**

God, Who is truly light according to the being, He truly makes Himself light in the ones who walk in Him through the virtues<sup>90</sup>. As the light through participation, in other words any saint, reaches through the love of God to be in that light according to the being, in the same way that light according to the being receives the love of people to be in that light according to the participation. If therefore we are through virtue and knowledge in God, namely in light, also God being in us as light, He is in light. Because God Who is light according to the being is in us that are light through imitation, like the model is in the image made according to it.

Or better said, also the Father is light in light, because He is in the Son and in the Holy Ghost, not being other and another light, but one and the same according to the being, lighting threefold according to the way of the personal subsistence.

### **Question number 9**

*In what meaning Saint John says again: “Brothers, now we are sons of God and it has not been shown yet what we will be”<sup>91</sup>? And what wants to say Saint Apostle Paul through the*

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<sup>89</sup> I John: 1: 7: KJB: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”; ROB: “And if we walk into light like He is in light, then we have impartation one with another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleans us of any sin”.

<sup>90</sup> At the end of the virtues God makes Himself evident to us as light.

<sup>91</sup> I John: 3: 2: KJB: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”; ROB: “You beloved ones, now we are sons of God, and what we will be it has not been yet shown to us. We know that if He will show Himself, we will be like Him,

words: “And to us God has discovered through the Ghost, because the Ghost visits everything, even the deeps of God”<sup>92</sup>? What must we understand, in the end, through “that what we will be”?

### **Answer**

Saint Evangelist John says that he does not know the image of the future deification of the ones who have become here sons of God through the virtues from the faith, because it has not been yet shown the hypostasis, seen as standing by itself, of the future goods. This is “because we walk here by faith, not by sight”<sup>93</sup>. And Saint Paul says that he has received through unveiling a godlike sign towards which he must run if he wants to achieve the future goods, not that he would know the image itself of the deification on the basis of that godlike sign. That’s why he clearly says, interpreting Himself: “I am running towards the sign, towards the crown of the calling from above”<sup>94</sup>. This one he does it wanting to know through suffering the way of fulfilling in fact of the godlike sign, done here to him through unveiling, namely through the deifying power of the worthy ones. So the Apostles confess in the same way, proving the same thought in the teaching that might seem to be opposed, as ones that are moved by One and the same Ghost. The first one confesses his nescience regarding the way of the future deification according to the grace; the second one announces in a great manner the news about the sign that has

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because we will see Him like He is.”

<sup>92</sup> I Corinthians: 2: 10: KJB: “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”; ROB: “And to us they have been revealed by God through His Ghost, because the Ghost studies all things, even the deeps of God”.

<sup>93</sup> II Corinthians: 5: 7: KJB: “(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)”; ROB: “Because we walk by faith, not by sight.”.

<sup>94</sup> Philippians: 3: 14: KJB: “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”; ROB: “But I do one thing: forgetting about the ones that are behind me and tending towards the ahead ones, I am running to the target, to the reward of the calling from above, of God, into Christ Jesus.”

been unveiled to him. That this is the reckoning of the Saint Apostles he himself confesses about it, by all his godlike words, by saying in one place that with all the science and all the prophecy will cease, and in another place that he sees the future ones as through mirror and through riddle, but it will come the time when he will enjoy the great and above all the understanding gift of seeing the hoped ones face to face; another time he confesses again that he knows from part and from part he prophesies, and at last he strongly cries out that he would have to know as he himself is known, because he does not know yet the ones that he will know them. Shortly speaking, the word of the Apostle that “when what is consummated will come it will cease what is fragment”, I reckon that it has the same meaning with what the Theologian says: “It has not been yet shown what we will be”.

### **Question number 10**

*If “the one who fears is not consummated in love”, how it comes that “nothing misses to the ones who fear Him”? And if nothing lacks to them then they are consummated. But then, how comes that the ones who fears is not consummate?*

### **Answer**

The good order of the Holy Trinity, which follows to the savior order of the ghost, making difference between the stages of the ones who advance, from the turmoil from outside of the passions towards the divine unity, between the beginners, who are at the gates of the godlike courtyard of the virtues, it has called them fearful; on the ones who have achieved a measured habituation of the rationalities and of the manners of the virtues, it has called them advanced; and on the ones who have reached through knowledge to the peak of the truth itself,

which makes itself transparent through the virtues, it calls them perfect.

Therefore, neither the one who fears the Lord, once he has totally turned himself from the old living in the corruption of the passions and he has dedicated his heart, due to the fear, to the godlike commandments, he is not deprived of any of the goods that are due to the beginners, even though he has not achieved yet the unmoved habituation of the virtues and has not yet made himself partaker to the wisdom that speaks out of the wise ones<sup>95</sup>. But neither the advanced one is deprived of any of the goods that belong to his stage, even though he has not achieved yet the knowledge of the godlike things which overwhelms even the consummate ones.

And again we can consider as fearful the ones who occupy themselves with the working wisdom (the practical philosophy) and they have not liberated yet their soul from the fear and from the thought of the future godlike judgments. To these ones, on one hand nothing lacks to them, as the blessed David says, once they are fighting for the truth against the enemy power. Although, on the other hand, they are lacked of the mysterious views of which the mind of the consummate ones is imparted. And the ones who in a secret way have been found worthy of the contemplative knowledge of God (the contemplative theology) and they have made their mind clean of any material imagination and they have made their all mind image of the godlike beauty through the imitation of that one, let's reckon that they are the loving ones.

Therefore, nothing is missing to the fearful ones, according to the blessed David, because they are fearful, even if the fearful does not have the fulness and the consummation of the mediated union with the Word, as the ones who love God, they have it. Because everyone enjoys the consummation

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<sup>95</sup> I Corinthians: 2: 6: KJB: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:"; ROB: "And the wisdom we preach it to the consummate ones, but not the wisdom of this eon, neither of the masters of this eon, which are perishable,"

“among his own order”<sup>96</sup>, according to the place that has been ordered to them, even though one is above the other, according to the quality and the measure of the spiritual age.

But once we know that the fear is twofold, according to the words: “Fear more the one who can lose both the body and the soul in gehenna”<sup>97</sup>, and “The fear of the Lord is clean, remaining forever and ever”<sup>98</sup>, and “Great and fearsome is over all the ones who stay around Him”<sup>99</sup>, we must question ourselves how the love abolishes the fear if this one endures forever and ever and how God remains fearsome in the endless ages over all the ones from around Him? This is, of course, for as we have said, the fear being twofold, one fear is clean and the other one is unclean. Thus the fear that is born from the waiting for punishment for mistakes, having the sin as cause of its birth, because it is not clean, it won’t last forever, but it will disappear together with the sin through repentance. But the clean fear, which endures always, even without the memory of the sins, will never cease, because it is existential. It keeps somehow on the report of God with the creature, as One Who makes evident to everybody His natural greatness, which is above all kingdom and power. Therefore the one who does not fear God as judge, but he worships Him for the overwhelming glory of His immensurable power, he rightly does not have any lack, being consummate in love, as one who loves God with the shyness and with the awe that are due. This is the one who has

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<sup>96</sup> I Corinthians: 15: 23: KJB: “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”; ROB: “But everyone amongst his own order: Christ beginning, and then the ones of Christ, at His coming.”

<sup>97</sup> Matthew: 10: 18: KJB: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”; ROB: “Do not fear the ones who kill the body, and they cannot kill the soul; rather fear yourselves the one who can destroy both the body and the soul into gehenna.”

<sup>98</sup> Psalm: 19: 9: KJB: “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”; 18: 10: ROB: “The fear of the Lord is clean, it lasts forever and ever. The judgments of the Lord are true, justified all of them.”

<sup>99</sup> Psalm: 89: 7: KJB: “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”; 88: 8: ROB: “God the extolled One in the council of the saints, great and fearsome is over the ones from around Him.”

achieved the fear which lasts forever and ever and will never have any lack ever.

So they agree with each other the Prophet and the Evangelist, because the first one says that are not deprived of anything the ones who fear the Lord with clean fear, and the second one, that the one who fears Him as judge, due to his defiled knowledge, he is not perfect in love. In this meaning God is fearsome also for all the ones who stay around Him, as One Who makes to be mixed with fear the love of the ones who love Him and reach around Him. This is because the love which is separated from fear is most often changed in contempt, not being restrained by the fear the daring which naturally is born from it. What does it mean, at last, "around Him", we will understand from the followings.

The surrounded One has the ones who surround him, ahead and behind, and to the right and to the left. Because, consequently, also the Lord has the ones who surround Him, we will understand as the ones from behind, the ones who walk without mistake on the footprints of the Lord God by fulfilling the commandments, namely by the virtue with the deed; through the ones from the left, the ones who have achieved the natural contemplation in ghost, together with the pious understanding of the judgments. Because the Book of the Proverbs says about wisdom: "And at its left side, richness and glory"<sup>100</sup>. Through the ones from the right hand we will understand those who have received the immaterial knowledge of the intelligible ones, free from the sensitive imaginations. Because: "in its right hand, he says, the years of the life"<sup>101</sup>. At last, on the ones from before, on the ones found worthy, for the overwhelming warmth of the mind towards the godlike beauty, of the joy of seeing face to face. And if there is also another

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<sup>100</sup> Proverbs: 3: 16: KJB: "Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour."; ROB: "Long life is on its right hand, and on its left hand, richness and glory; out of its mouth comes the righteousness; the law and the mercy it bears them on its tongue."

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

higher meaning of these ones, of course you can by yourselves encompass it both you and godlike men like you<sup>102</sup>.

### Scholia

The fear, he says, it is of two sorts: one clean and on unclean, because also the people, ones are sinful, and ones are righteous. The righteous ones guard in themselves, through the cleanliness and through the righteousness of the conscience, the first fear of God, honoring Him for the overwhelming greatness of His endless power; and the sinful ones expect from Him, through the second fear, the punishments for the mistakes. The clean fear remains forever and it is never erased, according to the word: "The fear of the Lord clean remains forever and ever". And the unclean fear is quenched and perishes, disappearing through repentance. That's why the Apostle, saying about the one who fears that he is not perfect in love, he has in his view the fear that is unclean, and the Prophet by saying that are not deprived of anything the ones who fear the Lord, he has in his view the clean fear.

### Question number 11

*Which was the first state of the angels, which they did not guard it, and which was the dwelling place, which they left it? And then, what are the eternal chains and what is the darkness under which they are kept? At last, what will they suffer at the great day of the judgment of the?*<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> In this answer the spiritual ascension is divided once in three steps (beginners, advanced, consummated), and another time in two steps (actives, and contemplatives), and in the end in four steps (the fulfilling of the commandments, the contemplation of the nature, the contemplation of the intelligible ones, the sight of God).

<sup>103</sup> Jude: 6: KJB: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."; ROB: "And on the angels that did not guard their worthiness, because they left

## **Answer**

The exact meaning of these ones is reserved only to the ones with apostolic understanding<sup>104</sup>, to the ones who have received directly from the Word the not-lying knowledge about creatures and about the good and righteous government of them through Providence; but in what concern me, who I am the most down and I have many barriers which impede the passing of the Word towards me, I reckon that the first state of the Angels, which they did not guard, it might be the reason according to which they were created, of the natural power given to them towards the deification according to the grace, or maybe again, the stage of their state according to the dignity of the grace. And the dwelling place is either the heaven, or the wisdom of the ground of the habituation with the good from above understanding, into which they have been destined to dwell, being given the fact that the Scripture uses to call the wisdom also as "house"<sup>105</sup>. But it can be also the supervision, with which they used to guard their natural homes, and earned of the cleanest godhead, which they have left through uprising (tyranny). The eternal chains are the total and continuous stillness of their will towards good, due to which they will never take part of the forgiveness from God<sup>106</sup>; or the power which impedes them, according to the Providence of God and for our salvation, in their madness against us, not allowing to them to carry their cunningness to an end against us. And the darkness is the total and full ignoring of the godlike grace, ignorance by which being they crossed through due to their good will, they cannot enjoy of the welcoming of the happy and shiniest light,

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they dwelling place, He has put them for preservation under the darkness, in eternal chains, toward the judgment of the great day".

<sup>104</sup> The one with the apostolic understanding are the one on the highest stage, of the contemplative one. Lower than them are the disciples. And lower than that there are the simple believers.

<sup>105</sup> Proverbs: 9: 1: KJB: "WISDOM hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:"; ROB: "The wisdom has built to itself house leaned on seven pillars".

<sup>106</sup> In this sense neither the sinners in hell cannot better themselves.

spending the entire power of the cogitation that was given to them – according to the nature -, into the preoccupation with the nothingness. At last, what it will happen to them in the day of the judgment, only the Right Judge knows it, Who will give to everybody the righteous reward, the one according to the worthiness, and will share on the measure of the evilness, the kind of the damnation, deciding with justice the fate due to the everyone, for the endless ages, according to His good judgments.

## **Question 12**

*What the shirt soiled by the body is?*<sup>107</sup>

## **Answer**

The soiled shirt is the life soiled by many mistakes of the body's passions. Because each man is transparent out of his behavior into life, either he is right, or he is unjust. The first one has the virtuous life as a clean shirt, the other one makes his life soiled by his evil deeds. Or maybe better, the shirt soiled by the body it is the habituation and the disposition of the conscience which gives to the soul a certain shape through the memories left by the bad impulses and deeds started from the body. This habituation, being seen by the soul as an always being shirt around the soul itself, it is filled up by the stench of the passions. Because as from the virtues woven together, the Holy Ghost makes to us a beautiful and honored shirt of the incorruptibility, in the same way out of the passions woven together the body makes us a unclean and stained shirt, which

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<sup>107</sup> Jude: 23: KJB: "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."; ROB: "On others, snatching them out of the fire, save you them; of others, however, have you mercy with fear, hating even the soiled shirt on their body."

shows through itself the soul, after it has given to it another shape and another image than the godlike ones.

### Question 13

*What does it mean: “The unseen ones of God from the foundation of the world, from the being are seen His eternal power and Godhead?”<sup>108</sup> Which are the unseen ones of God and which are His eternal power and Godhead?*

### Answer

It is about the reasons of the things, composed from before the ages by God, as Himself knew, reasons which the Holy Men use to call them also “good wills”<sup>109</sup>. These ones, being seen, are seen through understanding out of the creatures. Because all the creatures of God, being contemplated by us through nature, with the help of the due science and knowledge, they herald to us in a hidden way according to which they have been done, and they unveil to us through themselves the purpose placed by God in each creature, being in this meaning also: “The heavens tell the glory of God and the work of His hands is heralded by the strength”<sup>110</sup>. And the eternal power and deification it is the Providence which keeps the things together and the work of deification of the ones that are sustained by the Providence.

Or, maybe de seen things of God are not something else but His eternal power and deification, which have as full of light heralds, the wonderful greatness of the created ones. Because, as watching at the ones that exist, we believe in God the One

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<sup>108</sup>

<sup>109</sup> In Ambigua Saint Maximos says about Dionysus the Aeropagite and about the disciples of Pantaenus of Alexandria that they call these reasons “godlike wills” (G.P. 91, 1085).

<sup>110</sup> Psalms: 19: 1: KJB: “THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”; ROB: “The heavens tell the glory of God and work of His hands is heralded by the strength”.

Who truly exists, in the same way, out of the existential difference of genres of the existing ones, we know His subsistent wisdom, which He has it according to the being, and which sustains the things. And again, from the existential movement of the creatures, according to their genus, we know the subsistent life of Him, which He has it according to the being and which fulfills the ones that exist<sup>111</sup>. From the wise contemplation of the creation, we take out the rationality which enlightens us concerning the Holy Trinity, namely about the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (1), because the eternal power of God is the Word, the One of the same being with Him, and the eternal Godhead is the Holy Ghost. Condemned are therefore, the ones who did not know from the contemplation of the things their cause, neither the proper ones of the cause according to the nature, namely their power and their Godhead. Because the creation itself shouts out through the creatures from itself and it heralds to the one who can hear with their mind, its cause, extolling it in a threefold way, namely unveiling God and the Father, and His unspoken power and the Godhead, or His the One Begotten Son and the Holy Ghost. These are the unseen ones of God, but seen through the understanding from the foundation of the world.

### Scholia

1. Out of the things, he says, we know the cause of the things, and from the distinction of the things, we detach the hypostatic wisdom of the One Who Is. And from the natural movement of the things, we find out the hypostatic life of the One Who Is, namely the life-doer power of the things, or the Holy Ghost.

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<sup>111</sup> Here, the existence of the creatures is considered as image of the Father, and their wonderful organization as a unity in diversity, as image of the hypostatic wisdom, namely of the Son, and their movement or life, as image of the Holy Ghost; in the three aspects of the world, there are reflected, and there are working, the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

## Question number 14

*What does it mean: "And they worshipped and ministered to the creature instead of worshiping the Maker"<sup>112</sup>? What it is the worshiping (οεβασ) and what it is the ministering (λατρεια)?*

### Answer

Worshipping is honoring God faithfully, and ministration is serving through deeds. This worshipping, namely the faith, being moved by people towards the being, they honored this one instead of honoring the Creator, believing to the devils, to whom they also ministered, serving to them through their evil deeds. But we, honoring God through the faith in Him, we also strive to bring to Him clean ministration, and this one is the life consummated into virtues<sup>113</sup>.

## Question number 15

*What does it mean: "Your Ghost, the One without corruption, is in all things. That's why You punish with measure the ones who fall"<sup>114</sup>? If there is about the Holy Ghost, how "the wisdom won't enter in the reckless heart, neither will dwell into the body that is submitted to the sins"<sup>115</sup>? I've noted this because it was simply told: "in all things".*

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<sup>112</sup> Romans: 1: 25: KJB: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."; ROB: "As some people who changed the truth of God, and worshipped and served to the creature, instead of the Creator, Who is blessed forever, amen!"

<sup>113</sup> The virtuous life is a higher stage than the faith. The simple faith is the first stage, the virtuous life is the second one, and the contemplation is the third one.

<sup>114</sup> The Singing of Solomon's Wisdom: 12: 1-2: ROB: "Your Ghost, the One without corruption, is in all things. // That's why You punish with measure the ones who fall and, when they commit sin, You open their eyes and rebuke them, to forsake their evilness and to believe in You. Lord". (this quoted text is not present in KJB (E. l. t.'s n.))

<sup>115</sup> The Singing of Solomon's Wisdom: 1: 4: ROB: "Wisdom do not penetrate in the cunning soul and do not dwell in the body that is submitted to the sin". (this text is not present in KJB)

## **Answer**

The Holy Ghost is not absent from any creature and especially from the one that were found worthy of rationality. He sustains each of them in existence, because God and the Ghost of God are, through the power of the Providence, in all of them. And He moves the natural rationality from each one<sup>116</sup>, and through this action He brings to the knowledge of the wrong doings, the ones against the order of the nature, on the ones who is capable to feel, namely on the one who has the will willing towards receiving the right thoughts of the nature<sup>117</sup>. Because it happened to find out also from among the barbarians and nomads, many who live a full of good deeds life, and reject the savage laws which ruled in their time. In this way, one can say in a general manner that in everybody, there is the Holy Ghost.

In a different way, though, and with another meaning He was in all the ones who lived under the Law. In Them He sustained the Law and heralded to them the future mysteries, awakening in them the conscience of the transgressions of the commandments and the science about the future consummation into Christ. That's why we find out many also from among these ones, who, forsaken the old and closed into shadows ministration, they have moved joyfully towards the new and mysterious one.

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<sup>116</sup> Here, as also in the answer no. 13, it is shown the tight connection, and in the same time, the difference between God-the Word and the Holy Ghost: it is the same report like between "the natural rationality" from the man and "the power which moves it". "The natural rationality" can be darkened through passions; can slip away from its objective judgment. The Ghost through His energy can move it, can activate it and through these ones He awakens the conscience, when a committed deed wasn't in accordance with the conscience. The world mirrors even in its natural state both God – the Word and the Holy Ghost, in its rational and dynamic aspect, tightly united. (this quoted text is not present in KJB (E. l. t.'s n.))

<sup>117</sup> But the conscience it is chocked when the will is in a contrary to the nature disposition. About the conformity of the inconformity of the disposition of the will with the rationality of the nature, to be seen in the "Interpretation to the Lord's Prayer", The Romanian Philokalia, volume II, p. 278.

But besides the ways mentioned above, he is in another manner in all them who inherited through faith the truly godlike and deifying name of Christ. In these ones He is not only like the One Who sustain them and Who moves through Providence, their natural rationality, and then like the One Who unveil to them the transgression of the commandments and their keeping and herald to them the future consummation into Christ, but also like the One Who builds in them the adoption according to the grace, gifted through faith. But as wisdom Giver He is only in them who cleaned their soul and their body through the detachment and the thoroughly accomplishing the commandments. Into these ones He dwells like into His own ones, through the simple and immaterial knowledge that he imparts to them, imprinting in their mind the most pure and unspoken meanings, which raise them to deification<sup>118</sup>.

Therefore, in the most general manner He is everybody, because he sustains and is providential to everyone, and moves the natural germs from all people; in a different manner he is in the ones from under the law, for He makes known to them the transgression of the commandments and clarify to them the foretold promise of Christ; at last, besides the mentioned manners, He is in another way in all the ones who follow to Christ, as Doer of the adoption. Like giver of wisdom though, He is not in any of the ones in which He has been mentioned before as generally being, but only in the wise ones, who have been found worthy of His deifying dwelling, through a life according to the will of God. Because everyone who does not fulfill the will of God even though he is a believer, he has his reckless heart as laboratory of evil thoughts, and the body is submitted to the sins, as one who is always dominated by the filthinesses of the passions.

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<sup>118</sup> The adoption according to the grace, gifted through faith, all the believers have it. It is the first stage of the life in Christ. But at wisdom, at the simple, unitary and above understanding knowledge, one can reach after the cleaning of passions and after achieving the virtues. It is the highest stage of the spiritual ascension.

## Question number 16

*What does it mean: "the cast calf" and why it is called "calf" at singular, for immediately after that to be said: "are these your gods, Israel"? And what does it mean that they shattered it and scattered it under water? And them what are the earrings and the other adornments<sup>119</sup>?*

## Answer

The mind gone out, like Israel, from the sin's Egypt, having in itself the imagination which has gone out together with it from the straying of the sin, as some imprinting left by the evilness into the cogitation<sup>120</sup>, immediately that it is a little forsaken, because of its own lack of care, by the discernment of the rationality, as once Israel by Moses, gives birth, as to a calf, to the reckless (irrational) habit, which is the mother of all passions. Gathering purposely, like some earrings, the rationalities concerning God, in a naturally way detached from the pious understanding of the things, and as some necklaces the due opinions about the things which have been born into it from the natural contemplation, and like some hands bracelets, the natural works of the virtues, it melts them down into the oven, namely in the lit boiling of the anger and of the passionate disposition of the lust. Then, using the imagination of the shape of the sin, remained from before into the cogitation, which through its work is always scattered and scatters together with itself also the mind that is occupied by it, which in other words separated the mind from the Unitarian identify with its truth and scatters it in many and flickering opinions and imaginations concerning things that do not exist,

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<sup>119</sup> Exodus: 32: 4; 32: 20; 32: 2.

<sup>120</sup> This imagination (*φαντασία*) is the fantasy, which is influenced in its work by the imprints left in it by the old sins. The imagination to a man with an experience in his past does not have a neutral power, but always it is influenced, it is determined by the imaginings that he contrives from the deeds that he committed and by the images that he had, even though these ones do not move themselves anymore into conscience, but they are sunk into subconscious.

gives birth to the reckless habit. This habit is shattered and scattered under water, the coming of God-the Word, thinning out through the fines of the contemplation the thickness of the cogitation directed, due to the passions, towards the surface of the sensitive ones. This coming of the Word determines also to be chosen the powers (natural faculties), from the confusion and together interchanging, into which they were thrown by the passion, bringing them back again at the proper principle of their rationalities. For this seems to be to me "to scatter under water". Our interpretation has presented shortly in these words the whole meaning of the ones told in de place from above. But to become the place clearer, let's look at, if it is possible, each part of it in a more determined manner.

The "cast calf" it is thus the mixing and the confusion of the natural power together, or better said their passionate coming together, which gives birth to the reckless work of the passions which are contrary to nature. And the calf is one, because one is the habit of the evilness, the ones scattered into the many sort of the sins. And it is "calf" for its robustness resistance at work, for its gross character and for the easiness to digest and contrive, because it ruminates its sinful affection towards passions. And "cats" it is, because the habituation of the passions and their committing are shaped after the image of the sinful imagination, remained into the cogitation from before. The plural "these are your gods" it is used because by nature the sin is scattered and flickering, all-diverse and divided. Because if the good, by nature, unites and sustains together the divided ones, the evil divides and corrupts the united ones, at last, the earrings are the rationalities concerning God, which emerge naturally into the mind from the pious understanding of the things; and the necklaces are the right opinions about things on the basis of the contemplation, as the bracelets are the work the virtues with the deed.

Or again: the earrings are the innate rationality, because the ear is the symbol of the rationality. The necklace is the faculty of the anger; the neck is the image of the

haughtiness and of the tyranny. The bracelets are the lust showed through the willing of pleasure deed. All these, according to the meaning given to each one of them, lighting their mind in the fire of the passions, give birth to the reckless and foolish habit of the nescience, which is the mother of all sins. This one is thinned by the mind when, looking through cogitation at the thickness of the passions directed towards the surface of the things, unbinds the passionate embroilment of the elements which compose it, bringing back each one of them to its own principle - in this way scatters under water, namely it brings under the knowledge of the truth, the elements separated and loosen from the bad interweaving and amalgamation together.

For example, any passion is an interweaving between a submitted to the senses thing, between a feeling (the sense's work: perception) and a natural power (faculty), as are: the anger, or the lust, or the rationality, deviated from what it is proper to the nature. If, therefore, the mind sees the target of this embroilment of the sensitive thing, of the feeling and of the natural power, and seeing is able to bring back, through separation, each of them to its natural rationality, and to contemplate the sensitive thing in itself, without provoking the affection of the feeling for it, and the feeling free from the slavery of that sensitive thing, and let's see the lust of another one from the natural powers, without the passionate disposition for that thing or that feeling, as for instance a certain movement of the passion cause to became a look, has thinned the thickness of the calf, namely the composition of whatever passion, and scattered it under the water of the knowledge, causing to totally disappear even the simple imagination of the passions, by reestablishing the things that compose it in their natural purpose<sup>121</sup>. Let's be therefore, by thinning the fat calf,

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<sup>121</sup> This idea is taken from Evagrius (Heads about the Discerning of the Passions and of the Thoughts, Philokalia, Romanian translation, volume I, p. 63). Evagrius splits the passion of the love of money in: a) the gold itself; b) its meaning; c) the mind which has received it; and d) the passionate pleasure that ties the mind on it. At Saint Maximos the division is more psychological: a) object; b) perception and c) a natural faculty deviated from its natural work,

to make it disappearing from our soul, for the soul preserving untouched only the godlike image, undefiled by anything from outside. And the adding: “and with that water he watered the sons of Israel” it shows the cleaning teaching which is given to the disciples by the ones who teach them.

### Question number 17

*If God sent Moses in Egypt, why the angel of God tried to kill the one that was sent by God? Because surely the angel would have killed him if the woman wouldn't hurried to circumcise the little child, stopping through this the attempt of the angel. And if the circumcision of the little child was necessary, why God did not gently command to him, before sending him, to do this? At last, if that was a mistake, why the good angel did not gently advice on the one sent by God to such an assignment<sup>122</sup>?*

### Answer

The one who studies with the fear of God the meaning of the hard places of the scripture, and does not raise the cover of the letter from upon the ghost except for the glory of God, “will find out everything before himself”<sup>123</sup>, according to the Word of the wisdom, not being found anything which to impede the without error advancing of the understanding towards the godlike ones. Therefore we will let the history, which from a bodily point of view was accomplished even in the time of

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which expresses the b) and c) points from Evagrius. Through c) Saint Maximos gives us also an explanation of what the passion is in itself, what Evagrius does not do it, being satisfied to indicate it through the “enemy pleasure”.

<sup>122</sup> Exodus: 4: 24: KJB: “And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.”; ROB: “But, at a nightly halt, on the way, the angel of the Lord came at him, and tried to kill him.” (to be noticed that in KJB version we have “the Lord” and in ROB we have “the angel of the Lord” (E. l. t.’s n.).

<sup>123</sup> Proverbs: 8: 9: KJB: “They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.”; ROB: “All are clarified to the knowing one and righteous to them that have found the knowledge”.

Moses, and we will understand with the eyes of the mind its spiritual meaning, which is ceaselessly fulfilled, and it is fulfilled ever more, it is ever more alive.

The wilderness from which Moses is sent to Egypt to bring out of it the sons of Israel or the human nature, or this world, or the habit, lacked of passions, in one of this being the mind after it's achieved the knowledge of the things though contemplation, receives from the depth of the heart from God the hidden and mysterious urge to bring out from Egypt, namely from the body and from the feeling, as some Israelites, the godlike meanings of the things, for these to not continue foolishly toil with the kneading of the clay, namely of the passions of the body. Assigned with this godlike job, the mind departs, together with the wisdom, which is united with it, through knowledge, just like a wife<sup>124</sup>, and with the manner of the chosen behaviors, or with the noble thought, born from it, on the way of the virtues. This way does not allow any halt to the ones who walk on it, but these ones must advance strenuously and ceaselessly towards the target of the soul, namely towards the crown of the calling from above. Because the stopping on the way of the virtues it is the beginning o the sin, because then the mind occupies itself passionately with one of the material things, which stay on both sides of the road, and make the clean image and thought and circumcised of the pious behavior, not circumcised and defiled. When stops, it immediately sees through the conscience the rebuking rationality<sup>125</sup>, as an angel, menacing it with the death,

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<sup>124</sup> In Greek language “the mind” is of masculine gender, and “the wisdom” is of feminine gender (*νοῦς, σοφία*), so it is appropriate to be understood as husband and wife.

<sup>125</sup> In Greek language the rationality (reason) it is of masculine gender (*λόγος*). It is the rationality from inside us, which is a herald (an angel) of the will of God. The rationality slips from its objective position when the man surrenders himself to the sin, contriving to him arguments for his sinful deeds. But at the beginning, when the temptation occurs, the rationality still fulfills its role of showing the liar character of the deeds, towards which the temptation wants to allure the man. This moment is described here. The halt from advancing into virtue is not yet a falling into the sin, but it is a moment of hesitation, to which the danger of falling is very close; into the virtue one must always go ahead. Any hesitation is dangerous. A prolongation of it surely leads to the sin. Not only in this moment of hesitation the rationality heralds the truth that must be committed, but also after the man has fallen into

confessing that the cause of this menace is the halt on the way of the virtue, halt which makes the thought uncircumcised. The wisdom - the wife of the mind – appeases it by cutting with a stone (with the rationality of the faith), like Sephora, the material hallucination emerged in the child-thought and withers all the memory of the life according to the senses. Because it is said: "And the blood of the circumcision of the child stopped", namely the passionate life and the hallucination and its movement ceased, after the defiled thought was cleaned by the Wisdom of the faith. After this cleaning it ceases, just like an angel, also the reason of hitting through conscience, the mind that commits sins, and of condemning each of its thoughts that moves wrongly. Because the way of the virtues is really full of many saint angels, who make every virtue working, according to its kind, namely of many rationalities and sort of working<sup>126</sup>, as also of unseen Angels, who help us towards the good things and move these rationalities<sup>127</sup>.

The word of the Holy Scripture shows in a wonderful way, always the spiritual meanings before the told stories, to them who have achieved the healthy sight of the soul, and they do not gossip about God or about the Saint Angels. Because

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sin and the rationality has slipped to the role of contriver of arguments in the service of the sin, in a hidden way, the rationality still continues with a part of itself to herald the truth. It is a kind of doubling the rationality. At the surface, the rationality loudly sustains the lie of the sin, but in hidden it protests more or less perceptible, against the lie. The rationality has in both these two cases the form of the conscience. Because it is a fact that also the conscience has a rational element in itself. Neither the conscience must be perceived as a blind movement or the rationality as a purely theoretical function. The conscience is rational and the rationality is moral power, it is the movement of protest itself of our rational nature against the irrationality and the lie of the sin. But the movement of protest of the rationality is awoken also by the Holy Ghost, like we have seen in the Answer no. 15, and from the present Answer, results that also the angels move, proper-said, our rationality.

<sup>126</sup> Each commandment or virtue it has its own rationality, like ray of the divine Logos. But this rationality is acknowledged by the one rationality from within us, which in this way receives diverse forms. Each time the rationality from within us harmonizes itself with the rationality from a commandment and pleads for it. In this way there are many rationalities, but though only one.

<sup>127</sup> The rationality from within us it is truly moved by an angel, for coming back to its right judgment after falling into the sin. Or the rationality of each thing it is imposed to our rationality, when this one separated itself from that one through the sin, by an angel. And then in fact through the righteous movement of the rationality or of our conscience, there is manifested the goodwill of an angel towards us.

Moses when he was sent by God, he did not have, according to the spiritual meaning of the Scripture, a son or some uncircumcised thought. Because otherwise God would have commanded to him firstly to circumcise it and then He would have sent him. Neither the Angel showed cruelty, heralding to Moses that he could die because of the mistake of stopping himself on the way of the virtues, because in fact the halt of the way of the virtues could have brought death to Moses. Namely looking more attentively to this story, you will find out limpidly that not at the beginning, not at the middle and not at the end of the road, but “at a halt” the Angel met him and menaced him with the death for the mistake done in thought due to carelessness. So, if he would not have stopped himself from walking and he would not have interrupted the trip, he would have not been rebuked, by receiving through the Angel the menacing for the lack of circumcision of the child. Let's also pray to God, if we are on the road of the commandments, that at any transgression to not cease sending to us, like an angel, the rationality which to menace us into conscience with death, due to our mistake, for, awakening to the true feeling, to be us learning to cut through the innate wisdom, as a uncircumcision, the uncleanness of the passions which has stuck on us on the road on the life, because our lack of care<sup>128</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup> In general, according to Saint Maximos, the life into virtue is conceived dynamically. The virtue requests a continual movement of the nature upwardly. On the opposite, the sin is a halting, and then a rolling downwardly. The virtue asks for a continuous effort, even though we would want only maintaining it at the same degree. But nobody can maintain himself to the same degree into virtue, but he either increases himself into it, or he fall down from it. The simple ceasing from advancing, it means, as weakening of the effort of the virtuous life, a falling downwards.

A second things that must be remarked it is that the virtuous life, on one side, it is the only one conform to the nature, “as it ought”, on the other side that it is not possible without the angels. Therefore a flat separation between nature and grace it is not possible at all.

## Question 18

*If “the makers of the law will become righteous”<sup>129</sup>, after the Apostle how it was said again: “how many of you become righteous from the law, you have fallen from the grace”<sup>130</sup>?*

## Answer

Not simply de law makers will become righteous, but them who fulfill the spiritual law, which is spiritually understood, therefore the ones who fulfill the spiritual law, according to the man from within, in ghost. Only those will become righteous, because only these ones do not fall down from the grace, because the word penetrates to the depth of their soul, due to the fact that this soul is clean. But the ones who serve bodily to the law, according to the outside of the law, they surely fall down from the godlike grace, because they do not know the consummation of the spiritual law, which cleans the mind through grace of all the defilement, as also they do not know either the target (the end) of the law, which is Christ.

## Question 19

*What does it mean: “As many as did wrong without having the law, without the law will they perish; and as many as committed sin with the law in front of them, according to the law they will be judged”<sup>131</sup>? And how the same one says: “When God*

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<sup>129</sup> Romans: 2: 10: KJB: “(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”; ROB: “Because not the ones who hear the law are righteous to God, but the ones who fulfill the law will be straighten”.

<sup>130</sup> Galatians: 5: 4: KJB: “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”; ROB: “You who want to straighten yourselves by the law, you have departed from Christ; you have fallen from the grace”.

<sup>131</sup> Romans: 2: 12: KJB: “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;”; ROB: “As many, without the law, have sinned, they will also perish without law; and as many have sinned in

*will judge the hidden ones of the people according to My Gospel, through Jesus Christ”<sup>132</sup>? If there will be judged according to the law, how will they be judged through Jesus Christ?*

### **Answer**

Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as Builder of everything, He has done also the natural law. And as a Providence Doer and Giver of the Law, He surely gave both the written in letters law, and also the law of the ghost, namely the law of the grace. “Because the end of the law”, namely of the written law, spiritually understood, “is Christ”<sup>133</sup>. Therefore if in Christ, as Builder, as Providence Doer and as Law Giver and as Redeemer, there are gathered also the natural law and the written one and the one of the grace, it is proven the work of the godlike Apostle that God will judge the hidden ones of the men according to His Gospel, namely according to what is being preached to them. But his does not mean anything else but that He will judge through Jesus Christ, His Word the One Begotten according to the being, because He is dwelling into everybody and on some ones He rebukes, and on other ones He praise them according to their merit; and to the ones who lived according to the nature, according to the law and according to the grace, He gives to them through the unspoken and the One Begotten Word, Who exists according to the being together with Him, the things of which they are worthy. Because the Godlike Word is the Maker of the whole world, of all the law, all the stage and all the order, and the Judge of the ones who live according to the nature, according to the law, according to their stage and to the order. For without the word that promulgates,

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the law through the law they will be judged”.

<sup>132</sup> Romans: 2: 16: KJB: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”; ROB: “In the day in which God will judge, through Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel, the hidden ones of the men”.

<sup>133</sup> Romans: 10: 4: KJB: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”; ROB: “Because the end of the Law is Christ, towards righteousness to all the one who believes”.

there is no law. So, even someone is judged according to the law, through Christ he will be judged; or without law, again he will be judged through Him. Because the Word as Builder is the beginning, the middle and the end, of all the ones which are, are thought, and are named<sup>134</sup>.

## Question 20

*What does it mean the fig tree from the Gospel, which is cursed to wither apparently without any good reason<sup>135</sup>? And what does it mean that unrestrained hunger that asks fruit before the due time. And at last, what is the meaning of cursing an unfeeling thing?*

## Answer

God the Word, Who administers everything with wisdom having in sight the salvation of the men, He advised the nature before through the law, because this one agreed a more bodily ministration of God. For the nature could not receive then the naked Truth, without the coverings of the types, due to the nescience and to the estrangement born into it in opposition with the original of the godlike things. After that He Himself came to us in a revealed manner, making Himself a man by putting on the body, crossed by mental and rational soul, and He has removed the nature to the immaterial ministration through the knowledge in ghost. The Truth showing Himself alive, God the Word did not want to have the shadow mastery anymore, of which image was the fig tree. That's why He says: "Coming again from Bethany to Jerusalem", namely after He

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<sup>134</sup> God the Word is like beginning the Maker of all, like middle the order according to which also the power through all things are moved and developed, and like end the target towards which tend all things and to which they reach by fulfilling of all the law and order. Out of Him, in Him and towards Him are all things. The Word that dwells in everybody like the Great Rationality (Logos) speaks to everybody through their rationality, even to the ones who are in the natural state.

<sup>135</sup> Matthew: 21: 19; Mark: 11: 20.

gave to the world His presence hidden in the type and in the shadow of the law, he came again to the human nature through body. So must be understood the word: "coming, again, He saw a fig tree in the way, not having but leaves". Namely He saw the bodily ministration of the law, the one in shadows and types, sustained by a flickering and temporary teaching, placed - so saying - in the way, consisting only from passing types and rules. And the Word seeing this one, pompous and shiny adorned by the outside coatings of the bodily shapes of the law, as a fig tree by his leaves, and not finding fruit to the righteousness which to nourish the Word, He cursed it. And what followed was showed in fact, by totally withering the legalist beauty which had its being only in types and through this being quenched the haughtiness of the Jews related to the law. For it was not a justified thing, neither appropriate, that, "after the Truth of the fruits of the righteousness showed Himself plainly, to be deceitfully attracted by the leaves, the ones who pass through this life as on a road, than to leave the good fruit of the Word. That's why he says: "It was not the time of the figs", namely the time during which the law mastered over the human nature was not the time of the fruits of the righteousness, but the time when the fruits of the righteousness were prefigured. It was the time which foretold the godlike and unspoken grace which followed to come in the future to save everybody, grace at which not reaching the old people was lost through disbelief. Because "Israel - says the godlike Apostle - following the law of the justice, namely the one in shadows and types, did not reach at the law of the straightening, namely to the one consummated in ghost according to Christ"<sup>136</sup>. Or other meanings: because the multitude of the priests and of the scholars, of the law makers and of the Pharisees, which suffered from vain glory by keeping,

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<sup>136</sup> Romans: 9: 31: KJB: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness."; ROB: "And Israel, by following the law of the justice, did not reach at the law of the righteousness."

on the sight of the people, of some contrived morals, in so called, ghost of piousness, giving the appearance of fulfilling the righteousness, but nourishing in fact the haughtiness of the self-appreciation, the Word declares this self-appreciation of the mentioned men as unfruitful fig tree, adorned only with leaves. And this self-appreciation, the Desirer of the salvation of all the people, Who starves after their deification, he withers it by cursing it, because it is fruitless. And He does this for the people, instead of giving the appearance that they are righteous, they better try to be really righteous, getting off the shirt of the hypocrite morality, and putting on without dissimulation the virtuous one, as the godlike Word wants them, for in this way to spend their life in awe, and better showing to God the love of their soul, rather than to the people their hypocrite outside countenance of the moral behavior.

And if some Christians among us are alike, pretending us to be pious in our behaviors, without truly being, let's wait for the Word as a people Lover, for Him, starving after our salvation, to wither the self-appreciation of our soul, which is the seed of the sin, to not bring forth fruit anymore, the desire of the people to be pleasant. This is the interpretation according to my weak power. The given interpretation shows the Lord starving for our good, usefully cursing the fig tree and withering it at time, as one tree which impedes the Truth, either it is understood through it the old order of the law of the material forms, or the self-appreciation of the Pharisees which were proud of keeping the morals.

## Question 21

*What does it mean: "Undressing the Chieftains and the Masteries..." and the others<sup>137</sup>? And how was He clothed with them once He was without sin?*

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<sup>137</sup> Colossians: 2: 15: KJB: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."; ROB: "Undressing (of power) the principalities

## Answer

The godlike Word, the One Who in every aspect like us except the sin, put on without changing our nature and through this He made Himself a full man, He showed in Himself the first Adam through the characteristics of the conceiving and of the birth<sup>138</sup>. The man, receiving his existence from God, and starting to exist just through the act of the creation, he was free of corruption and sin, because these ones were not created in the same time with him. When he, though, committed sin transgressing the commandment, he received the chastisement of the birth, which is sustained through the sin, the sin having its source in the suffering characteristic<sup>139</sup> emerged because of the sin, as in a law of the nature (1). On the ground of this law no man is without sin, each man being submitted through the

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and the masteries, He disgraced them in the sight of everybody, overcoming upon them through the cross”.

<sup>138</sup> Από τη σύλληψη και τη γέννηση. The creation (γένεσις) shows the direct provenance from God through an act of creation. The birth (γέννηση) shows the provenance from man and woman copulation. Jesus took some of the characteristics of the birth, but not all of them, and especially not the sinful ones. That's why He did not also lose all the characteristics of the genesis. In this way, in Him were shown again some of the characteristics of the old Adam before the sin, as also some of the characteristics of him after the sin. Form that Adam from before the sin He took the lack of sin and the incorruptibility received through creation; from that Adam from after the sin He took the suffering characteristic come through birth, but not the passion against nature, which would have annulled the lack of sin and the incorruptibility. According to the opinion of Saint Maximos, as also of the other Fathers, the people was not destined to multiply through “birth”, but through an another way. “The genesis” means here also the characteristics which the human nature has, or had them through creation, and “birth”, those characteristic which it has them though this way of coming to existence. These are the characteristics consequent to the sin, which choked some of the original characteristics. Instead of “characteristic” it is possible to say also “mode” (τρόπος), as it is in Greek language.

<sup>139</sup> The suffering characteristic are the affects (τά πάτη) entered, according to the answer no. 1, into the nature, after the sin. They are not sinful, but they ease the birth of the sin. For instance, the appetite is a sinless affect, but its extraction or deviation it is a sin. They have become as some sort of a natural law, namely they accompany in a necessary way our being in our earthly existence. But do not take on the eternal idea itself of the nature, and so they won't belong to it in the heavenly existence. From here results the natural character of the marriage in report with the earthly existence and the natural character of the virginity in report with the eternal existence at which the nature is called. The marriage is natural, but is appropriate only to a passing stage of the nature.

nature to the law of the birth, which was introduced after the creation, due to the sin.

Because, therefore, due to disobedience the sin has entered, and due to the sin has entered into the nature of the people the suffering (passionate) characteristic through birth and because ceaselessly with this suffering characteristic of the birth through the sin was being refreshed the first transgression, there was no hope of liberation, the nature being shackled with its will approval into a bad bond. Because as much the nature struggled to preserve itself through birth, the more the snare of the chain of sin was tightened, having in itself the first mistake working through the suffering characteristic. Because the nature having just in the suffering characteristic the source of the sin's increasing, due to the natural affliction, bore, due to the general sin comprised in the suffering characteristic, through the passions against nature, the works of all the Powers and Masteries hidden into the according to the nature passions (affects).

Through these works the whole cunning power was contributing, using the suffering side of the nature, to the corruption of the passions against nature, pushing the will towards them through the according to nature passions (affects).

Making Himself, due to His love for the people, the One Begotten Son and the Word of God and complete man, for getting out the nature of the men from this tribulation, from the first composition of Adam, which Adam had it from the creation, He took the lack of sin and the incorruptibility, and from the birth that was after that introduced into nature, due to the sin, He took only the suffering characteristic, but without sin. The evil power had, as we have said, due to the sin, their works hidden into the suffering characteristic received from Adam, as into a necessary law of the nature. Seeing them into the Savior the characteristic of the suffering nature from Adam, due to the body that He had, and imagining themselves that also the Lord received the law of the nature by necessity like

any common man and not moved by the decision of His will, they cast also upon Him their lure (*δόλωμα*) hoping that they will also convince Him that through the according to the nature passion (through the natural affect) to hallucinate the against nature passion, and to commit something pleasant to them. The Lord, permitting to them the first attempt (*πείρα*) of the temptations (*πειρασμών*) through the pleasure (2), made them to entangle themselves in their own cunningness and through this He disrobed them, banishing them from nature, because He remained inaccessible and untouched by them. In this way He won the victory, of course not for Himself, but for us, for whom He made Himself man, laying all the profit in our benefit. For did not necessitate try for Himself. The One Who was God and Master and free by nature from all the passion, He accepted the try for, attracting to Himself the evil power by accepting our temptations, to defeat - through the lure of the death<sup>140</sup> - that evil power which expected to defeat Him as it did at the beginning with Adam.

So that from the first try He disrobed the Chieftains and the Masteries which undertook to lure (attack) Him, banishing them far away from nature and healing the side of pleasure of the suffering characteristic. Through this He Himself annulled the charter of Adam, through which Adam willingly agreed with the passions of the pleasure and through which, having the will tilted towards pleasure, Adam heralded – even keeping his silence – the domination of the cunning one upon him, through the deeds that Adam was committing, by not being able to liberate himself from the chain of the pleasure, due to the fear of death<sup>141</sup>.

That's why, therefore, through the victory upon the first try (*πείρα*), through pleasure, He thwarted the plan of the evil

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<sup>140</sup> While Satan was the one who lured the man before, through pleasure and through the promise of a false life, desiring covetously the death of the enslaved ones, now Jesus lures him with the opinion that He could die. The death of Jesus became bait to Satan.

<sup>141</sup> This charter was a contract always confirmed by the will of Adam, through which, driven by the lust of the pleasure from the suffering characteristic, accepted the slavery of Satan. Jesus refuses to accept anymore the pleasure offered by Satan, and so He abrogates the contract with that one.

Powers, of the evil Chieftains and of the evil Masteries, the Lord allowed them to put in work also the second bait (the second attack = προσβολή), namely to come also with the only try that remained to them, with the temptation through pain, in this way, those powers fully pouring in Him the corruptible venom of their evilness, but He burnt that venom as by a fire, totally destroying it from nature. So He disrobed, in the time of death on the cross, the Chieftains and the Masteries, because He remained undefeated by pains. Better said He shewed Himself fearsome to the death, brought out from nature the painful side of the suffering characteristic, from which the man, running away willingly, due to the cowardice, as one who was always terrorized, without wanting, by the fear of death, he persevered in the slavery of the pleasure, simply and solely to live.

After the Lord disrobed, therefore, the Chieftains and the Masteries at the first try of the temptations in the desert (κατά τὴν πρωτην τῶν πειρασμὸν πείαν)<sup>142</sup>, by healing the side of pleasure of the entire nature, He disrobed them again in the time of death, also eliminating the side of pain from the suffering characteristic of the nature. In this way He took upon Himself, as He would have been a guilty one, our feat, due to His love of people, or better said, He wrote in our account, as a Good, the glory of His feats. Because, like us, taking without sin the suffering characteristic of the nature, through which the entire evil and corruptible power uses to work its evil things, the Lord disrobed the evil powers in the time of death, because they came also upon Him for spying Him. And He overcame upon them and nailed them on the cross in the time of yielding up of the soul, as ones which did not find out anything proper to them in His suffering characteristic (3), while they expected to come across something human, due to the suffering characteristic which He had it by nature due to the body. So, He worthily liberated through His saint body taken from us, as through a beginning, the whole nature of men mixed in it through the suffering characteristic, submitting through the

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<sup>142</sup> At the first temptation with hunger (E. l. t.'s n.).

suffering characteristic itself of the nature, the cunning Power which is just in it (namely the suffering characteristic), reigning upon the nature. There is, of course, a more mystical and higher meaning of this word. But because, as you already know, the more hidden meanings of the godlike dogmas must not be given in writing, let's be content with the ones told until here, which can appease the inquisitive cogitation. And if God will find me worthy also to see your face, we will tell you also the apostolic meaning with the whole care<sup>143</sup>.

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<sup>143</sup> This “answer” is a wonderful page of Christology and anthropology. The main notion with which operates Saint Maximos in this answer it is that of “suffering characteristic” (*τό παθητόν*), which the human nature has achieved consequently to the Adam’s mistake. This suffering characteristic, introduced by sin, it differs from the passivity which human nature it has in general just by creation, which it means in general the characteristic which make the human nature to easily endure internal states and movements or strange influences in opposition with the wanted attitudes, and active, of the nature; in this sense passive is event the nature by its creation or definition. **Even the movement is passivity because the nature can decide how to move itself, but the movement it is a must.** But the special suffering characteristic emerged after the sin it comprises three elements: the sufferance capacity, the passions appropriate to the nature (the affects) and the passions against nature. In this “Answer” it is about only the last three ones. Using in translation the word passion (*πάθος*) of Saint Maximos, we have added in parentheses, when was felt the need of a special clarification, to the passion in sense of sufferance, the word suffering of sufferance, to the passion according to nature the word affect, and to the passion against nature we haven’t added anything. The natural affect it is for instance the hunger, of the fear of death. The passion against nature is the hunger become pervert appetite, or the fear of death transformed in despair which leads to any moral abdication to escape death. Saint Maximos does not understand through the word *πάθος* only the evil passion in the sense of the other saints from Philokalia, as sin become habit which enslaves us, but in it, he lays besides this meaning also the meaning of the affect according to the nature. In the suffering characteristic (*τό παθητόν*) entered into the nature after the sin are also comprised these three meanings. But the passions against nature are at the beginning only as virtuality. Firstly, it means only the passions conform to nature and with the capacity of sufferance; in a necessary manner the nature manifests itself in such affects. But the necessity manifested in these affects easily leads to their exaggeration in passions contrary to nature. The sin is generally comprised in this suffering characteristic and it has its source of growth in it. Although sinful are properly said only the passions against nature, in the common man the natural affects are developed so quickly, so automatically and so surely in affects against nature, than one can say in general the whole suffering characteristic is touched by sin, or tilts towards sin. Saint Maximos says that “when the natural affects are satisfied over necessity, they are the way on which the devil comes into the soul”, but “when they are satisfied according to the necessity they are the way on which that one must return in his country” (Answers towards Thalassius 49, Scholia 15, G.P. 90, 461). That’s why Saint Maximos says that “the power of the evil hide their works in the bosom of the natural affects, for whipping these ones to become due to the necessities of the nature in affects contrary to nature”. Another division of the suffering characteristic, clearly presented by Saint Maximos, it is that in affects of pleasure and affects of pain. It is

### Scholia

1. Genesis (γένεσις) he calls the first creation of the man by God, and birth (γένησις) the succession of ones from others, which has come after due to the Adam's mistake.

2. He deigned to inappropriate our temptation (πείρα), the one through pleasure, to attract the tempter, because he was, also as man, by nature, lacked of the passion of pleasure. Because as man He was by nature submitted to the passions (affects, sufferings) with the body, for His possibility to die, but through the leaning of his will He was not passionate, as One Who was without sin.

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clearly understood that under the moral aspect both these sorts can be according to the nature or against nature. Jesus took also the suffering characteristic of the human nature after the Adam's falling into the sin, but Jesus being without sin, He had not from this characteristic but the capacity of sufferance and the natural affects, of pleasure and of pain. In other words these affects were restrained by His will, than never were developed or were transformed in contrary to the nature affects. But the evil power thought that, setting in movement also in Jesus these affects, they will make them to become contrary to the nature, sinful affects, leading also Jesus to sin.

They tried to do this once with the affects of pleasure. Jesus had pleasure for a piece of bread in the state of hunger, but Satan could not push this pleasure to the searching at any cost of that piece of bread. So He restrained the movement of Satan on this plan, for that one was proved to be weaker that the power of Jesus. Saint Maximos says that Jesus through this has totally brought out from nature the side of pleasure of the suffering characteristic, namely the affects of the pleasure. The affects it is what dominates. But defeating the temptation of Satan, Jesus did something more than not letting the affect to become and affect against nature. He placed in general the affect under His will. But a mastered affect is not anymore a proper-said affect. So the pleasure in it is not anymore a forcefully power above the will, but a movement always in accord with the will.

The second time, Satan tried to push Jesus into the sin through the affect of the pain, at crucifixion. But Jesus defeated this time also the power of the evil one, and by this not only He stopped the natural fear of pain do be develop into a fear contrary to nature, but in general, he eliminated the fear of pain from the nature, putting it under the domination of the will. In this way he eliminated in general the suffering characteristic from the nature; or He plucked out his fangs, or the needle through which Satan was injecting the poison into the human nature. The affects of pain were dangerous because of the will in its desire to get rid of them and in general of the dread of death was throwing itself in the opposite direction, being attracted by pleasure. And the pleasure was dangerous through this powerful attraction which it exercised it upon the will to the slavery. Jesus has raised through Himself, in general, the human nature above pleasure and pain, above the suffering characteristic. And this effect from His human nature is prolonged in general into the nature of all the people who enter in communication with Him. Let's not confound with the affect of the pain the capacity of sufferance, or of feeling the pain. This one remains in the human nature also after the man overcomes the affects of pleasure and pain. But through sufferance the man is always above the affect of the pain, if the affect is something that dominates, not something that is dominated.

3. He called: proper to the nature, the slipping with the will towards the sin after Adam's mistake, due to the weakness, which the Lord had it not, even according to the body, being also according to the body sinless by nature.

## Question 22

*If God will show His richness in the future ages<sup>144</sup>, how “the end of the time has reached at us”<sup>145</sup>?*

## Answer

The One Who gave existence to the entire seen creation, only with the power of His will, He had before all ages, so also before the creation of the world, a most good and unspoken plan regarding the world. And this plan was that the world to become united with Himself, without change, with the nature of the people, through the true union in a hypostasis, and to unite with Himself in an unchanged manner, the human nature (1)<sup>146</sup>. And this was to become Him a man, like only He knew, and to make the man God by uniting him with Himself. In this goal He divided the ages with wisdom, appointing some of them for the work through which He made Himself a man, and some

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<sup>144</sup> Ephesians: 1: 17-18: KJB: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: // The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”; ROB: “For God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory, to give to you the ghost of the wisdom and of the revelation, towards His full knowledge, // And to enlighten the eyes of your heart, to understand which is the hope at which He has called you, which is the richness of the glory of His inheritance, in the saints ones.”

<sup>145</sup> I Corinthians: 10: 11: KJB: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”; ROB: “And all these things happened to those ones, as foreshadowing of the future, and were written for our advising, at which the end of the time has reached.”

<sup>146</sup> εγκραθήσαι = to be mixed. The Saint Fathers use the term “mixture”, but not the one of “merger”, between the human nature and the godlike one. The mixture is the tight union but which preserves the identity of each one; the merger changes these identities.

others for the work through which He makes the man God (2). The end of the ages decided from before for the work through which He made Himself a man, has reached at us, the advice of God regarding the embodiment finding its fulfillment through its achievement. Thinking at these things the godlike Apostle and seeing that the advice of God regarding the ages decided by God to make Himself a man, has been fulfilled the embodiment of God-the Word itself, he says that "at us has reached the end of the ages". Therefore, it is not about all the ages thought by us, but about the ones appointed for the achievement of the mystery of the embodiment, which have come at their end through the decision of God.

Once the ages appointed from before, for the work through which God was to make Himself a man, ended at us, God truly fulfilling His consummated embodiment, we must wait from now on the other ages which will come, which are appointed for the work of the mysterious and unspoken deification of the men. During these ages God will show to us the overwhelming joy of His kindness, consummately working the deification into the worthy ones. For whether He has reached at the end of the mysterious work of the humanization, making Himself in all aspects like us, except the sin, and descending to the lowest parts of the earth, where the tyranny of the sin cast the man down, of course He will reach also to the end of the mysterious work of God of man's deification, making the man in all aspects like Him, except the identification in being with Him, and raising the man above all heavens, where the natural greatness of the grace calls the man, due to the endless kindness, the man who lies on the ground (3). This thing, the great Apostle, wanted to make us known, when he said that "in the ages that will come will be shown in us the overwhelming kindness of God".

Let's divide with our thought the ages and appoint ones for the mystery of the embodiment, and others for the grace of the man's deification. By doing so we will find out that the first ones reached their end, and the other ones haven't yet. Shortly

speaking some of the ages are for the descending of God to people and others for the ascent of the people to God. Understanding the things in this way, we won't blame the Holy Scripture of haziness, reckoning the Saint Apostle as suffering of contradiction in one and the same question.

Or better: if our Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning, the middle and the end of all the past, present and future ages, we rightly can say that it has reached at us, in the virtuality of the faith, the end of the ages destined to the deification of the worthy ones, which will be shown<sup>147</sup> in fact according to the grace in the future (4).

Or again: being given the fact that one is the rationality of the activity and another is the rationality of the suffering (of the passivity), the godlike Apostle discerning the past ages from the future ones, he discerned through these words in a mysterious and wise manner the rationality of the activity from the one of the suffering. In this way the ages of the life into the body, in which we are living now (because the Scripture also knows temporal ages, according to the word: "And he toiled in age and will live to the end"<sup>148</sup>) are the ages of the active state and the future ones, which follow after the ones from here, are the ages of the ghost, of the transformation in the suffering state (5). So, being us here in state of activity, we will reach once at the end of the ages, our power and our work through which we are active coming to an end, and in the future which will come, suffering the transformation of the deification through grace, we won't be in activity, but in passivity, and that's why we won't reach ever at the end of our deification (6).

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<sup>147</sup> The end of the ages destined to the deification has reached at the end as virtuality in faith (*δύναμει τες πίστεως*), if in the faith there is virtually comprised the state of ultimate consummation at which we will reach through the power of Christ, which is in it, for the time being as beginning, having to develop itself and to lead us to the middle state and to the consummated one. Because in the beginning is virtually comprised also the end; our deification, or the identification with Christ according to the grace, hidden as power into the faith, it will be shown as seen reality (*κατ εἰδος*) and actualized in the future.

<sup>148</sup> Psalms: 49: 9: KJB: "That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption."; 48: 9: ROB: "To remain somebody forever alive and to not see death ever."

Because the “suffering” from then will be above nature and there won’t be any rationality which to limit the endless deification of the ones who suffer it. Therefore we work as much time as we have in activity the working power of the virtues, which is rational by nature, and the power of thinking, capable, without restriction, of all the knowledge, being capable to cross the entire universe of the things that are and are known, and to make his own, retroactively, all the ages that past. And we will suffer, after we will have totally past beyond the rationalities of the ones created from nothing, and we will have reached in an incomprehensible way at the Cause of all things. Then we will let to rest, together with the ones that are limited by nature, also our powers, achieving what never could be achieved by the power according to the nature, because the nature has not the power to encompass what is above nature. Because nothing of what it is created is maker of deification, once neither can encompass God<sup>149</sup>. Because only to the godlike grace it is proper to destine the deification to the created beings according to their measure, and only the grace makes the nature transparent with that light which is above nature, and raises it above its borders through the overwhelming of the glory (7).

Therefore, it is right to say that the end of the ages has reached to us, though we have not received yet, through the grace of Christ, the gift of the goods from above nature. For these goods have as images and foretelling characteristics the diverse manners of the virtues which can be known through nature<sup>150</sup>. Though these ones God ceaselessly makes Himself man in the worthy ones (8). Blessed is therefore the one who

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<sup>149</sup> The rationality is a practical power through which we judge what is good to be done and what is not. The cogitation (a function of the heart) knows the different rationalities of the created works. But after we have ended with the knowledge of these ones, we cannot know God through some natural power of us, because the Infinite One cannot be encompassed by our finite intellectual powers. Then God will give to us an infinite godlike power as organ through which we will be able to encompass the Infinite One. God Himself will know Himself through us. We will suffer His knowledge – this knowledge it won’t be our product. That power will also deify us.

<sup>150</sup> Are known through nature not in the sense that are know exclusively through the natural powers, but in the sense that the natural powers of the creature are still active, while in the state of deification there will not be working but the grace.

has transformed God in man, within himself, through wisdom. Because after he has fulfilled the doing of this mystery, he suffers his transformation in God through grace, and this thing will never cease to be done always<sup>151</sup>. Because the One Who works this thing in the worthy ones, not being limited according to the being, he has also the power which works this boundlessness, and even exceeds any boundlessness<sup>152</sup>. This work never ends together with the things done by it, as happens to us. Rather maintains together with itself, the ones who have received the existence from this work, because they cannot exist without it. That's why he called it also as richness of the kindness, because it never ends the all-enlightened affection of God towards us, through which He works our transformation regarding the deification. (10)

### Scholia

1. The union of the Word with the body in one hypostasis unveiled the unspoken target of the godlike counsel. Because not mixing the being through the union with the body, but showing a single hypostasis also after the embodiment of the Word, it showed that the target of this counsel was that the body to remain body according to the being, but to become according to the hypostasis, godlike.

2. From the ages, he says, some of them unveiled to us the work of the embodiment. Their end has reached at us.

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<sup>151</sup> In the ways of the virtues and in knowing the divine rationalities from nature, when the natural power of the creature is active, God is the One Who sustains this power of the creature in activity. So God works somehow as a man, in the manner of the creature. After this sort of work has ended, being reached the culminating state of it, the created work of the creature is transformed in godlike uncreated work. If before God transformed Himself in a subject of a created work in man, (or man), now the man becomes subject of godlike work (or God); before, God was covered by the man, now the man is covered by God. And the growth of the godlike work into the man, or the deification of the man, will last forever.

<sup>152</sup> The godlike work, through which the man will work, it has no border. The man will always increase in it, but without becoming ever exactly like God, because the man cannot identify himself with God according to the being, to the spring of the being.

Other ages show the work of the deification of man's nature. The richness of their glory has not been yet shown to us.

3. The embodiment of God, he says, it is a sure warranty for the man's hope of deification. This work makes the man God, as fully as God made Himself man. Because it is proven that the One Who made Himself a man without sin, He will deify the nature without transforming it in God; and he so much will raise the man because of Him, as much as He descended because of the man.

4. Another meaning, through which it is shown that in Christ are encompassed in a concentrated and not-separated manner the beginning, the middle and the end of the ages. He reached to us through the embodiment, as an end, having by nature the fulness of the godlike kindness, of which He has made us partakers in Himself according to the grace, laying in us the hope as strengthening of the faith.

5. Another meaning, the rationality of the activity is the natural power for fulfilling the virtues, and the rationality of the suffering is the grace of the ones from above nature or the inrush of the contrary to the nature ones. As we do not have natural power for what is above us, in the same way we do not have by nature power for what it is not. Therefore we suffer the deification through grace, as something that is above nature; but we do not work it ourselves. For, we do not have, by nature, a power capable to work the deification. And again, we suffer the sin as an accident contrary to the nature, but accepted with our will<sup>153</sup>. And this is because we do not have a natural power for bringing the evil in existence. So, while we are in this life from here, we work, at the fulfilling of the virtues, having towards this work a natural power. And in the future we will suffer the deification, by receiving as a gift the grace towards suffering it.

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<sup>153</sup> The sin become passion drives us without our will. The insanity, as the last degree of the sin, of nature's alteration, does not leave any trace of voluntary initiative into the man, but the man is in a total passivity. That's why in the hell the man cannot do anything for his salvation. In this state the man cannot even repent himself.

6. After this life, he says, we will cease working the virtues, but we will not cease suffering the deification according to the grace, like a reward for them. Because the suffering which above the nature is borderless, it is because of that also full of effective force; but the one that is contrary to the nature is also without consistence, and that's why is without power.

7. Governing the anger and the lust, the rationality works the virtues. And the mind taking heed at the rationalities of the things, after banishing the contrary ones, it finds out what is worthy to be loved through nature, and the mind, after passing over the ones which can be known, it notices the Cause of the things, the one above science and knowledge; then emerges the suffering of the deification through grace. This suffering detaches the rationality from the occupation with the natural discernment, because there is nothing to be discerned and stops the mind from that cogitation according to the nature, because there is nothing to be known. He makes God the one worthy of godlike participation, through the identity which he receives through rest (*καταποιουν τη κατά τηνστάσιν ταυτοτετι Θεον*)<sup>154</sup>.

8. The sorts of the virtues and the rationalities of the things are, he says, the images of the godlike goods. The diverse kinds of virtues are like some kind of body of God, and the rationalities of the knowledge in ghost like some kind of soul. Through these ones He deifies the worthy ones, giving them the consistent seal of the virtues and destining to them the enduring substance of the true knowledge.

9. The richness of the goodness he interpreted it for us as the affection of the kindness of God for us.

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<sup>154</sup> By participating to God, the mind does not pass anymore either the desire from a thing to another. That man remains forever totally unchanging. But that is not a dead change, but a living (an intense suffering of God in the self). He is God not only because he has in his self the godlike works, but also because he is unchangeable as God is.

## Question 23

*If David reigned only over that Israel according to the body, and that Israel rejected the Kingdom of Christ, for which reason Christ passed to Gentiles<sup>155</sup>, how can still be true the word of the Archangel: “And God will give to Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever”<sup>156</sup>?*

## Answer

This bewilderment has a clear and obvious interpretation. For “if not all the ones of Israel are also Israelites and not all of them are the sons of Abraham, for the fact that they are the seed of Abraham, but God will reckon them as seed of the promise”<sup>157</sup>, and if, on the other hand, even “the number of the sons of Israel would be as the stars of the sky and as the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved”<sup>158</sup>, it is clear

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<sup>155</sup> Acts: 13: 46: KJB: “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”; ROB: “And Paul and Barnabas, daring, they said: To you it was appropriate to be spoken, firstly, the word of God, but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of the eternal life, behold we turn us towards the Gentiles.”

<sup>156</sup> Luke: 1: 32-33: KJB: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the **Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: // And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”; ROB: “This One will be great and the Son of the **Most High** will be called and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of David, His father. // And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and His Kingdom will have no end.”

<sup>157</sup> Romans: 9: 6-8: KJB: “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: // Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. // That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”; ROB: “But not as the word of God would fell, because not everybody from Israel are also Israelites; // Neither because they are the descendants of Abraham, are all of them sons, but “into Isaac, He said, will be called descendants to you:; // Namely: not the children of the body are children of God, but the sons of the promise are reckoned as descendants.”

<sup>158</sup> Romans: 9: 27: KJB: “Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.”; ROB: “And Isaiah

that through Israel one understands the faithful people, which sees God through the deeds of the righteousness and through the true knowledge from the faith, either as it is from the seed of Israel, or as is from the seeds of the Gentiles. Because the one who bears in him clear and untouched the seal of the Abraham's faith, of Isaac and of Jacob, is not a stranger to the calling and to the grace of the true Israel.

But also the blessed David himself, reigned over the faithful ones from Israel. For this reason, immediately that Israel quenched the light of the faith it was detached also from the kingdom of David (1)<sup>159</sup>. Consequently, it is about the spiritual throne of David and about the spiritual kingdom of the rational souls, about the faithful house of Jacob and about the saint and great people, about which God promised in a prophetical way that it will be born from Moses, replacing the bodily Israel which continuously bitters God, about that people to which the bodily Israel serves only as an image. This was shown by God saying: "Let Me and I will destroy this people at once and I will make you bigger and more feared nation than this one"<sup>160</sup>. So, it isn't about the unfaithful house of Jacob, which ceaselessly upsets God, about the sinful and of cunning seed nation, about the lawless sons, about the chieftains of Sodom and about the people of Gomorrah, about the ones who turned with a cunning turning and forsook the Lord, about the ones who angered the Saint of Israel and they did not know God and didn't understand Him, about the ones who were wounded by the incurable of the faithlessness, which cannot be healed by any rational method of cure, which to heal them of

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cries for Israel: "If the number of the sons of Israel would be as the sand of the sea, the remnant will be saved."

<sup>159</sup> 1 Kings: 12: 28: KJB: "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."; 3 Kings: 12: 28: ROB: "And by taking counsel, the king made two golden calves and he said to the people: "You ought not to go to Jerusalem; behold Israel, your gods, which brought you out from the land of Egypt!"

<sup>160</sup> Deuteronomy: 9: 14: KJB: "Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.", ROB: "But let me, now, to destroy it and to wipe out its name from under the sky, and I will raise up out of you a greater people, more powerful and more numerous than they."

the soul's disbelief. It isn't about the ones about whom he says: "Woe to you, sinful generation, cunning seed, sons of the lawlessness, you have forsaken the Lord and you have angered the Saint of Israel. How can you hurt yourself anymore, increasing your lawlessness? There is no place where to be put a cataplasm, neither the oil nor the ties do help"<sup>161</sup>. It is not about the ones who are limping of both feet<sup>162</sup>, about the ones who turned away from the truth and they were brought out from the godlike inheritance, like Cain and Ismail, Esau and Ruby, Er and Onan, Manasseh, Eleaf and Amon, all the first born of the Patriarchs and of the Prophets, who were denied and rejected. That's why He says: "My first born Son, Israel"<sup>163</sup>, but not a born one (2). Because was expected the receiving towards adoption of a pious and devout people, built to please God and brought to the adoption according to the grace, through the rejection of the first born and unfaithful people of Israel. Because that one upraised itself by envy, against the spiritual Abel<sup>164</sup>, whom he killed and Cain did; he mocked the

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<sup>161</sup> Isaiah: 1: 4-6: KJB: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. // Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. // From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."; ROB: "Woe to you, sinful nation, people burdened of injustice, lowbred, sons of perdition! They have forsaken the Lord, they have denied the Saint of Israel, and they have turned their back to Him. // Where to be stricken anymore, you the always rebellious? The whole of your head is all wounds and all your heart is weakened. // From top to toe there isn't any healthy place; all is only plagues, bruises and wounds full of puss, unclean, not softened with oil and not tied."

<sup>162</sup> I Kings: 18: 21: KJB: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."; III Kings: ROB: "Then Elijah came close to the whole people and said: Until when will you limp of both feet? If the Lord is God, follow Him! And if is Baal, follow that one". But the people didn't answer anything."

<sup>163</sup> Exodus: 4: 22: KJB: "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:”; ROB: “But you must say to Pharaoh: So says the Lord God of the Jews: Israel is My son, my first born one.”

<sup>164</sup> Genesis: 4: 8: KJB: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."; ROB:

deified life of the spiritual Isaac as Ismail did<sup>165</sup>; angered himself upon Jacob, the one spiritual as Esau<sup>166</sup>; he spilled out on the land of the straying and of the passions the seed of the faith and of its righteousness, as Er and Onan, and he rejected the Church of God, as those did with Tamara<sup>167</sup>; and he made Manasseh's virtues forgotten<sup>168</sup>; he angered himself due to his own pride with the spiritual David, who received the Kingdom, and that's why he despised him as Eliasaph did<sup>169</sup>; and in the end he has made himself the beginner of a strange law, as Amon did (3). It isn't about these estranged sons, who have deviated limping from their paths<sup>170</sup>, which blow only wrath and death<sup>171</sup>, of these bodily sons who really are only bodies and they are totally strangers to the grace, "of whose God is the

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"After that, Cain said towards Abel, his brother: "Let's go out to the field!" And when they were in the plain, Cain threw himself upon Abel, his brother, and killed him".

<sup>165</sup> Genesis: 21: 9: KJB: "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking."; ROB: "But seeing Sarah that the son of the Egyptian woman, Agar, who this one born to Abraham, laughs about Isaac, her son,"

<sup>166</sup> Genesis: 27: 41: KJB: "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob."; ROB: "That's why he hated Jacob, for the blessing his father blessed him with. And Esau said in his thought: "The days of mourning for my father come nigh; then I am going to kill Jacob, my brother."

<sup>167</sup> Genesis: 38: 7: KJB: "And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him."; ROB: "But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in front of the Lord and that's why the Lord killed him."

<sup>168</sup> II Kings: 21: 2: KJB: "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel."; IV Kings: ROB: "This one did wicked things in the sight of the Lord, following the abominations of the heathens which the Lord banished them from the face of the sons of Israel."

<sup>169</sup> I Samuel: 16: 6-7: KJB / I Kings: 16: 6-7: ROB; <sup>169</sup> I Samuel: 17: 28: KJB / I Kings: 17: 28: ROB.

<sup>170</sup> II Samuel: 13: 10: KJB: And Ammon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, where I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Ammon her brother.; II Kings: ROB: "And all people went out from him. Then Ammon said towards Tamar: Bring the food in the back room and I'll eat there from your hands". Then Tamar took the cakes that she backed and brought them to Amon, her brother, in the back room."

<sup>171</sup> Acts: 9: 1: KJB: "AND Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest," ROB: "And Saul, still blowing menace and killing against the Lord's disciples, he went to the hierarch,"

stomach and of whose glory is in their shame”<sup>172</sup>, of whose memory of faithless people perished with sound<sup>173</sup>. But, as we have already said it, it is about the faithful and spiritual Israel, about that Israel who sees God through the faith, out of all nations through the choice of the grace<sup>174</sup>, to constitute a people and a holy nation and a heavenly priesthood<sup>175</sup>. God promised to this one, speaking through the angel towards the Virgin, to give it to the Savior and God of everybody, to be born, and to reign upon it. This promise has received its proof through the manner itself in which the things were done. Because the Lord fulfilled the promises made to the parents, blessing and adopting all the nations of the spiritual Abraham, and by making Abraham spiritual father of all the nations through the faith, and He sitting on the spiritual throne of David and reigning forever over the faithful house of Jacob, His kingdom not having an end.

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<sup>172</sup> Philippians: 3: 19: KJB: “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”; ROB: “The end of these ones is the perdition. The belly is their god, and their glory is in their shame, as ones who have in their mind the earthly ones.”

<sup>173</sup> Psalms: 11: 2: KJB: “For, **lo**, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. ”; Psalm 10: 2: ROB: „For, lo, the sinful ones strained the bow, they have prepared arrows in the quiver, to shot in the darkness the upright in the heart ones.”

<sup>174</sup> Romans: 11: 5: KJB: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”; ROB: “So, in the same way also, in the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace”.

<sup>175</sup> I Peter: 2: 9: KJB: “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” ROB: “And you are a chosen seed, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, people earned by God, to herald in the world the goods of the One Who has called you out of darkness, to His wonderful light,”

## Scholia

1. In the times of Jeroboam Israel detached itself from the House of David, falling out the faith in God.
2. The listing of the firstborn ones rejected from the beginning of the time, to who resembles also the people of Israel. We can admit that about this people was indirectly said that: "My son, the first born one, Israel", showing us that in quality of firstborn will be rejected, to be called through faith the people adopted after Israel, chosen from all earthmen.
3. The brothers envied by the firstborn ones imagine the Lord and the new people through faith.

## Question 24

*What does it mean the word from Acts about Peter: "Passing on the first guard and the second one, he came at the iron gate?<sup>176</sup>"*

## Answer

The faithful and working mind<sup>177</sup>, being like Saint Peter, caught by Herod, namely by the law of the skin (because Herod is interpreted as "the one of skin"), or by the bodily thought, it is locked up behind two guards and an iron gate, namely it is fought by the work of the passions and by the agreement of the thought with them. These one being passed by the mind, as some guards, or prison cells, helped by the rationality of the

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<sup>176</sup> Acts: 12: 10: KJB: "When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him."; ROB: "And passing they the first guard and the second one, they reached at the iron gate which leads into the city, and the gate opened by itself. And going out, they crossed a street and immediately the angel departed from him."

<sup>177</sup> It is the first step of the spiritual ascension. Because this ascension begins from the simple faith, it reaches at the working of the virtues (*πρακτικός*), then at the contemplation of the rationalities from nature, and in the end at seeing of God.

working philosophy (like by an angel)<sup>178</sup>, it reaches at the iron gate, which leads into the city, namely to the tight and hard to defeat weaving, between the senses and the sensitive things. This one being opened by the rationality of the natural contemplation in the ghost, it lets the mind to leave without fear towards the related world of the intelligible ones, liberated from the Herod's fury<sup>179</sup>.

### Scholium

Guards he calls the habituation with and the committing of the sin. Because the characteristic feature of the habituation it is the consent with the sin. Under the slavery of the sin the evil one fights to keep the saints. And the iron gate is the natural relation with the senses with the sensitive ones, from which the rationality of the active knowledge, as an angel, sets free the truly faithful one.

### Question 25

*What does it mean: "I want you to know that Christ is the head of all man, and the head of the woman is the man and the*

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<sup>178</sup> The rationality being in Greek language of masculine gender (*λόγος*), it can be easily reckoned as being symbolized by the angel. On the other hand the reason of each thing and of each activity, being reckoned by Saint Maximos as a ray heralding the Supreme Rationality (the Logos), its comparison with an angel is appropriate, who is at his turn a herald of God.

<sup>179</sup> The working philosophy it is the endeavor for purifying, which is the first stage of the spiritual ascent, supposing the starting from the faith. With the help of this one (or of the rationality = its angel) the mind evades from the two prisons, from the sin with the deed and from the habituation with the sin. And then the mind reaches in front of the world, which even it is not urging anymore the mind to sin, it is still not transparent to the mind, but it is as an opaque wall, as an iron gate in the way towards the spiritual world, the man not knowing how to see the world but only with the senses. This gate is opened or it is made transparent by the natural contemplation in ghost, respectively the reason (its angel). It is to be observed that Saint Maximos doesn't call the first stage as working wisdom (*σοφία*), but love of wisdom (*φιλοσοφία*). The wisdom is achieved on the highest stage. In front of the endeavor for virtues, the man doesn't have the wisdom yet, he is not wise yet, but he has only the love for wisdom.

*head of Christ is God. Any man, who prays, or prophesies, having something on his head, he puts to shame his head, and any woman, who prays and prophesies with a bare head, she puts her head to shame: because it is the same as she would have had a shaven head?”<sup>180</sup> And what does it mean: “That’s why the woman must have on her head a sign of mastery because of the angels?”<sup>181</sup>*

### **Answer**

It must be known that by saying the godlike Apostle that “Christ is the head of every man”, he affirmed that Christ is the head of every faithful man, who fulfills the godlike commandments and contemplates the dogmas of the awe. Despite of its general content that word doesn’t encompass the unfaithful men. For how could be Christ the head of the ones who don’t have faith. Consequently, according to a higher meaning of this place, we say that the man is the active mind<sup>182</sup>, which it has as his head the rationality (the word) of the faith (1). By looking at this direction as towards Christ, the mind composes its own life, building it with the gifts of the commandments through deeds; in this way it doesn’t dishonor its head, namely the faith (2), by placing upon it some earthly cover from outside. What does it mean that it doesn’t put above the faith anything from the temporary and perishing ones. Woman of this mind we say that is the habit of the doing itself, which is covered with the rich hair of the many thoughts and manners of practical life; or better said, this habituation it has

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<sup>180</sup> I Corinthians: 11: 3: KJB: “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”; ROB: “But I want you to know that Christ is the head of each man, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ: God.”

<sup>181</sup> I Corinthians: 11: 10: KJB: “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”; ROB: “That’s why the woman ought also to have (sign of) submission upon her head, for the angels”.

<sup>182</sup> The mind (in the Greek language of masculine gender) in its endeavor after the virtues is leaded at the beginning by the faith, and not by evidence.

the mind itself as head, covered by the thick adornment of thoughts and images. And we say that Christ is the hypostasized faith (3), of which head is obviously God, towards Whom the rationality of the faith leads, by showing God to the one who raises his cogitation from the lower ones, in which he also is according to the nature<sup>183</sup>. And we can say again that the man is the mind which cultivates the natural contemplation into ghost, having as head the Rationality (the Logos) creator of everything, which shows Itself to the one who believes, out from the beautiful order of the seen ones (4). This one isn't dishonored by the mind, because the mind doesn't cover it and doesn't place it under some of the seen things, and it doesn't raise, over all, something above it. The woman of this mind is the feeling (the work of perceiving), which is its companion of life, and through which penetrates in the nature of the sensitive things, and gathers the more divine rationalities from it (5). The mind does not allow to this consort to take off, in its work, the veils of the rationality, and to make itself the servant of the recklessness (of the irrationality) and of the sin, for in this way, rejecting the more divine rationalities as some vestments, to receive as head, instead of the mind, the passion of recklessness<sup>184</sup>. And head of Christ, namely of the creator Rationality (Logos), Who unveils Himself out of the things, analogically with them, through their natural contemplation, permeated by the faith, there is the unspoken Mind, which gives birth to the one according to the being (6). Towards that Mind, the Rationality (the Word) through Himself, leads the mind, which climbs through the pious contemplation of the things, by imparting it from the spiritual visions of the godlike ones, according to the knowledge of the seen ones (7).

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<sup>183</sup> Until here, through the man who has Christ like his head, and through the woman who has the man like her head, it has been indicated the first step of the spiritual ascension, the active one.

<sup>184</sup> Here, through the unveiled man and through the covered woman, it is indicated the second stage of the spiritual ascension, the contemplation of the nature. This contemplation, though it is called natural according to its object, it is made in ghost, therefore in the grace. It is a work of the rationality helped by grace. Only such a work of the rationality rightly knows the nature.

And again, the man is the mind reached inside the mysterious knowledge of God (of the mystical theology) (8), having Christ as unveiled head, namely the Rationality of the faith, understood in an unknown way, of better said: known in and not-understood way (9), through the mysterious indemonstrable initiations. The mind reached through exercise at the deifying emptiness (*στέρησις*), praiseworthy, which totally and distinctively exceeds it and everything that exists, doesn't put over that Rationality nothing from the ones that exist, neither feeling, nor rationality, neither something known, nor something thought, neither something spoken, nor something felt or something that feels. The woman of this mind is the cogitation cleaned of the entire sensitive imagination (11), having as head the mind richly covered with the illuminations (*επιβολαίς*) without beginning and above understanding of the unspoken and unknown dogmas. And head of Christ, namely of the Rationality mysteriously denied through exceeding, it is the Mind raised in an absolute manner and infinitely, over everything and in all manner (12). On this one, Christ, the One spiritually understood as the Rationality of the Mind by nature, makes it known to the worthy ones. Because He says: "the one who has seen Me, he has seen the Father"<sup>185</sup>. And the understanding of the divine Rationality truly becomes knowledge of the Mind Who has given birth to that one, because the Rationality shows the Mind subsisting in Himself by nature. Towards that Mind, the Rationality elevates that mind which desires itself about the identification with God through grace (13), after this mind has liberated its understanding of the multitude of the qualitatively and quantitatively diverse things; and which mind gathered itself

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<sup>185</sup> John: 14: 9: KJB: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"; ROB: "Jesus said to him: For so long I am with you and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen me he has seen the Father. How are you saying: Sow us the Father?"

into a deiform unity, through the identity and the simplicity of the ceaseless and knowing movement around God<sup>186</sup>.

So, the active (working, practical) mind, “by praying and prophesying”, in other words, trying to find out the rationalities of the virtues (because so must be understood the word “praying”), or by discovering their images through deeds (because so must be understood the word prophesying), this mind must look only at the naked rationality of the faith, not deviating its cogitation its thought or its word to nothing else, and so not covering its head, or putting something else on it. And any woman, namely any active habit of the active mind, “by praying of by prophesying”, namely moving in a hidden way its internal disposition, or showing the vesture in the manners of the external behavior, if it does this without a rational discernment, dishonors its head. Because then it cultivates the good by following to a lust, once it is lacked by the rationality which adorns it like a cover. Also, the entire mind which is exercised in the natural contemplation, is it prays itself or if it prophesies having something on its head, in other words it tries to know the rationalities of the things or shares these rationalities to others, with some impulse towards something else, without a pious purpose, it dishonors its own head, as one which puts above the right and pious knowledge something from the perishable ones. Any woman, namely any perception oriented in the natural way towards the sensitive things, if it hasn't the covering rationalities of these ones, dishonors its head, by occupying with the contemplation of the seen ones out of passion, for the natural affection towards them. And again, the whole mind in love with the mystical theology, if it prays and prophesies having something on its head, namely if penetrates to the mysterious views in an unknown way, of

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<sup>186</sup> Here is described the third stage of the spiritual ascension. The rationality of the faith of this stage isn't anymore the faith as evident norm from the first stage, but it is the Logos Himself directly known, but above understanding, after the exceeding of everything, and in this sense reckoned rather as object of the faith. Here is shown that the apophatism doesn't mean a total nescience, but parallel with the apophatism there takes place mysterious enlightenments.

teaches and initiates others in theology, having some form of understanding while knows or makes known that Word from above understanding, puts its head at shame, by putting the simple and from above understanding One under something of the ones which exist and which are known (14). The mind must be then emptied of any idea or knowledge, to see the true God Word, without using the eye, clearly knowing that in what concerns God are more true the negations through exceeding, which announce the positive divine reality by totally denying the ones that exist (15). And any woman, namely any cogitation of such a mind, by praying or by prophesying with the uncovered head, namely emancipated from under the mastery of the mind, which is shadowed by many mysterious views, it dishonors its head, by rejecting the godlike and mysterious knowledge which covers the mind as it would be a head. So, any man, namely the active, working mind, either natural or theological, when it prays or prophesies, namely receives the teaching of teaches others, let it have unveiled its head, namely Christ: the active one, not valuing anything more than the faith and the virtue; the natural one by not putting any rationality above the prime Rationality; and the theological one not contouring in any way in the schemes and the meanings earned out of the things, the One Who is above understanding and knowledge. And each woman, namely each habit of the active mind, or the perception of the natural one, or the wise cogitation of the theological one, let it cover its own head: the active habit, having placed on itself the discernment of the rationality with which to discern the ones which ought and the ones which ought not to be done; the perception the power of the rationality with which to judge knowingly the seen ones; and the cogitation, the totally indemonstrable knowledge of the ones from above understanding, because any habit, any perception and any cogitation, not covered in the shown mode, it is not different from the shaven one, namely from the one which doesn't have any rationality of the virtue, or of the awe, or of the mysterious knowledge, and of the godlike love.

So any such woman has to have, rightly, always the mastery of the rationality, or the rational surveillance upon the head. And this one in the first place for angels, who see our shown or no-shown movements, and they write any thoughts and any deed towards our praise or damnation in the fearsome day of our unveiling. Then for the thoughts of the conscience, also being understood figuratively as angels<sup>187</sup>, which remonstrate us in for what we have committed, or defend us now and in the judgment day. At last, for the evil angels also, which lurk our habit, and perception, and our cogitation, for immediately they see these ones unveiled of the discernment, of the awe of the mental and rational knowledge, to rush themselves in, causing to be born the opposite of these ones: the lack of discernment, the lack of awe and the nescience, through which the evil devils work the sin, the error and the faithlessness.

And head of Christ has been called God, Who like Mind is by nature the principle of the Rationality.

### Scholia

1. Man is also the one who occupies himself with the active (working, practical) philosophy.

2. He has called Christ like head, as hypostasis of the future goods. Because the faith, according to the godlike Apostle, “it is the hypostasis of the future ones and the proof of the unseen ones” through which He Himself is shown. For “in Him are hidden all the treasures of the knowledge and of the wisdom”<sup>188</sup>.

3. The hypostasized faith is the effective and working faith, through which the Word of God shows Himself embodied

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<sup>187</sup> The “thoughts” in Greek language have male gender (*λογισμοί*) as the angels have.

<sup>188</sup> Hebrews: 1: 11; KJB: “NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”; ROB: “And the faith is the trust of the hoped ones, the proving of the unseen things.”

in commandments<sup>189</sup> in the active ones. And through this the Word brings the active ones towards the Father, in Who He is by nature.

4. The man is also the mind which is exercised with awe in the contemplation of the nature, having as head the Rationality of God, which is contemplated through the faith by the cogitation, as creator cause of all the seen ones.

5. If somebody wants to see the creation in a right manner (because the man has the natural power to see good and to discern the good from the evil), he will be guided towards the tree of life, which is God, the maker of any tree, "in Whom are hidden the treasures of the knowledge and of the wisdom". And if, by wrongly using the natural power (by abusing it), he will want to see the creation in an evil manner, he will depart from life and he will eat from the tree which hides in it the discernment of the good and of the evil, submitting to the feeling and to the irrational reckoning the mind and the rationality. So, such a man will reckon the pleasure as being good, and the pain and the toils of the body as being bad, because they don't help to that self-preservation; and he will consider the creature as God, obtaining from within it the occasions of the bodily pleasures.

6. Because in the same time with the rationality, which is the Maker of everything, it is also cogitated the Mind, at which the Rationality reports itself as at Its cause, he called the Father as head of Christ, in His quality as Mind, which gives birth to the Rationality by nature.

7. Out of the being of the seen ones and out of their movement and variety, we know the Holy Monad in three hypostases.

8. Man is also the initiated one in the mystical theology.

9. To the word: in not-understood way, there must be added: through exceeding, because the One Who is believed, namely God, He is above understanding.

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<sup>189</sup> Colossians: 2: 3: KJB: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."; ROB: "In Who are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and of the knowledge."

10. The one who has received in an unknown way, through the denial of the seen ones in the sense of exceeding them, the unmediated sight itself of that Rationality above any rationality, he has as head the all-unique Rationality, over which and with which and after which there does not exist any other rationality by nature. That Rationality has by nature the unique Mind as birth giver, towards which guiding, as towards His head, the mind which follows Him, through the Ghost of the same being with Him, gives him life.

11. He says that the woman of the active mind is the habit, as birth giver of the ways of the virtues; of the natural one the feeling (the perception through the senses) ennobled through the rationalities of the Ghost, as birth giver of the dispassionate images of the things; and of the theological ones, clean cogitation, capable to suffer in a unitary manner the unique light in three brightnesses.

12. Christ, he says, He is the Rationality above being and embodied in a supra-existential way, while neither His embodiment was encompassed by the mind through the natural rationality. And the head of this one is the not caused by nature Mind, cogitated together with the Rationality, of which cause is. Because the one who has seen through faith the Rationality, he mysteriously has seen in the same time with the Rationality also the Mind which gives birth in a not-temporal way to the Rationality, being in Rationality by nature.

And some people say that through Christ it is here indicated the humanity of Christ, as one which is the head of everything, namely of the entire nature. And head of this humanity is the Godhead of Christ. By giving the name to the whole of the parts, these ones bring a correct interpretation.

13. The identity with God of the consummated mind, it means the simple and undivided movement of the mind around the One Who is by nature the One and the Same. This movement doesn't receive meanings that are different according to the quantity of the substance or according to the quality of

the power, but only an unspoken joyfulness, full of a feeling from above understanding.

14. The prayer of the active (practical) one consists, he says, in asking the virtues, and the prophecy in the true communication of the rationalities from them. The prayer of the one who occupies himself with the contemplation of the nature, he says, consists in asking the scientific knowledge of the things, and his prophecy "in communicating this one to the others" through a true teaching. At last, the prayer of the one who occupies himself with the theology, its, he says, the mysterious quietness, during which the mind becomes, through the negation of the things in the sense of exceeding them, worthy of that union from above understanding and knowledge; and the prophecy of this one is the mysterious initiation of the others in these ones. Because the prayer does the union with God of the one who prays, and the prophecy for God urges the one who prophesies to communicate to the world the goods given to him<sup>190</sup>.

15. When we affirm God out of things, we think at Him together with them, but as the maker cause. But when we totally deny God starting from things, we do not think Him neither in quality of their Cause, because, rightly speaking, He doesn't have any relation with the things, on the ground of which we would have to cogitate together the ideas of the ones which are in relationship<sup>191</sup>. Therefore, the true theologian makes from the nescience through exceeding, a position of true knowledge; namely, he knows the characteristic of God of being totally not-understood.

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<sup>190</sup> The prayer, accompanying the man on all the stages of the spiritual ascension, to the union with God, is different on each state of the man. The prayer as mysterious quietness is the pure prayer.

<sup>191</sup> Saint Maximos often says that God is outside of the relationship, meaning that He is not necessarily tied to the things, for when we cogitate Him, to cogitate that the things necessarily derives from Him. God can be cogitated without things.

## Question 26

*If the king of Babylon allegorically means the “devil”, how it is understood the word sent by God through Jeremiah the prophet, to the kings of the nations and to the kings of Judah, through which He threatens them “with prisons and chains, famine and death, sword and slavery, if they won’t serve him, and to the ones who will serve him willingly, it will be with tolerance on their land”?<sup>192</sup> And why He calls him “His servant” by saying: “I have given the entire earth to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant, and also the beasts of the land I have given them to serve him”<sup>193</sup>. What it means serving the devil and what the beasts are? Then, what the six sorts of threatening are and who the kings of the nations and the kings of Judah are?*

## Answer

The devil is both enemy and avenger of God. He is enemy when, out of the hatred for God he gives to himself an appearance of a destroying love for us the people, urging us through the willing passions of the pleasure to chose instead of the everlasting good the temporary goods. Through these ones he steals later the entire desire of the soul; he totally detaches

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<sup>192</sup> Jeremiah: 27: 8: KJB: “And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.”; ROB: “If some people or some kingdom will not want to serve Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and will not bow his neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that people with sword, with famine and with plague, until I will destroy it with his hand.”

<sup>193</sup> Jeremiah: 27: 6 : KJB: “And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.”; ROB: “And now I will give all these countries in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant, and even the beasts of the land I will give them to him to serve him.”

us from the love for God, making us enemy with the will, of the Maker.

And he is avenger when, unveiling the whole his hatred towards us, who have ended debtors to him due to the sin, he asks our punishment (1). Because nothing delights the devil more than the punished man, being allowed to do this, and contriving one after another the sufferings of the unwilling passions, he rushed upon as a merciless blizzard upon the ones that he has earned, with the permission of God, with a power which doesn't aim to fulfill a godlike power, but only wants to satisfy the passion of his hatred against us. He wants that for the great burden of the painful troubles, the soul exhausted with weakness to cut off from itself the power of the hope in God, making out of the painful happenings that come upon it, not causes for the recollection of the mind, but causes of faithlessness.

God, being good and desiring to pluck out totally of us the seed of the sin, namely the pleasure, which detaches the mind from the love for God, he allows the devil to bring upon us torments and punishments. Through this he withers the venom of the pleasure from before with the torments of the soul (2) and in the same time he wants to plant the hatred and the consummated disgust towards the present ones, which only caress the senses, as towards ones that bring nothing else, being used, but punishments. He wants further more to make out of the punisher power and out of the hatred of that one towards the people a cause of the forced bringing back to the virtue, of the ones who willingly have slipped out of it.

So, the devil is called "the servant of God", as the one who, with the permission of God, punishes the sinners, but still remains an apostate and a cunning thief, as one who has the tendency of the will very related to the ones who departed from God through pleasure. Because it is right to be tormented by the devil the ones who have embraced with voluptuousness his cunning plans through the willing sins. So, the devil is both the

sower of the pleasure and the bringer of the pain through the unwilling passions.

When, so, the inhabitants of Judea and of Jerusalem, namely the ones who have achieved the habit of the deeds or the science of the contemplation, use these ones for their glory from the people, shadowing the ways of the virtues by fulfilling them only like so, and being content only by speaking the words of the wisdom and of the knowledge, without committing the deeds of the righteousness, and even more, boasting themselves in front of other for the virtue and science of theirs, they rightly are provided to the toils and to the troubles, for through their sufferance to learn the humbleness forgotten by them, because of the vain opinion that they have about themselves. Knowing this thing, also the wonderful Apostle delivered to Satan the lawless one from Corinth towards the destruction of the body, for the ghost to be saved in the day of Lord Jesus<sup>194</sup>. That's why are delivered also the king of Judaea and the king of Jerusalem to the king of Assyrians, being shown through these ones that the contemplative and knowing (gnostic) mind is delivered to the devil towards punishment, for that one to bring upon it torments and troubles according to the justice, and the mind to learn, by suffering, to philosophize rather towards the patience in troubles, than to boast itself vainly for things which don't really exist.

So, everyone who willingly and with thanksgiving endures the hard troubles of the unwilling tribulations, being conscious about the wrongdoings that he has made, he isn't brought out from the habit and from the grace of the virtues and of the knowledge, as erstwhile the inhabitants of Judaea and Jerusalem. And this is because they willingly endure the yoke of the king of Babylon and, as one who pays a debt, he welcomes the torments come upon him. By remaining into

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<sup>194</sup> I Corinthians: 5: 5: KJB: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.;; ROB: "Give one like this to Satan, towards the destruction of the body, for the ghost to be saved in the day of Lord Jesus."

these torments, he pays to the king of Babylon the forced labors of the suffering side of the nature, consenting to them through the right-judgment, as one who owes them to that one due to the sins from before; and to god he brings true worshipping, namely through the humble disposition of the soul, the correction of errors.

But the one who doesn't receive with thanksgiving the unwilling troubles and trials, brought upon him with the permission of God, for correction, and doesn't repent himself by rejecting the high opinion about the self which comes from imagining that he is righteous, but he resists against the decisions of God founded on His right judgments, as yesteryear the inhabitants from Judaea, and doesn't accept willingly the yoke of the king of Babylon, he is provided, at the godlike command, to the king of Babylon to be brought in slavery, to the thrown in prisons and chains, to suffer hunger and thirst, being totally brought out from his land, namely, from the imagined habit of the virtue and of the knowledge. By bringing him in slavery, he is condemned to the estrangement from the godlike ones; by casting him in prisons, he is condemned to the liar imaginations about things; by putting him in chains, to the total ceasing of any good deed; by hunger, to the lacking of the godlike teachings; through death, to the thickening and to the total insensibility towards the good ones; through sword, to the passionate and raffish thoughts, which quench the memory of God (3).

All of these and more than these ones are endured by the one brought out from the habit of the virtue and of the knowledge, as off his land, for the fact that he doesn't want, due to the pride and to the vain imagination, to pay the debts for the mistakes, willingly accepting the troubles, the needs and the tribulations. In this regard let's have the godlike Apostle as example, who although, for his righteousness, was free of all debt towards these ones. Because the great Apostle knew, that the humiliation from the outside of the body through labors, it is the guardian of the godlike treasures from within the soul.

And therefore he endured with joyfulness, both for himself and for whom he followed to be example of virtue and faith, and even they would rightly suffer, according to the punished Corinthian, to have comfort and example of patience the one who innocently suffers.

And the kings of the nations from this place of the Scripture I believe they are the men who stay in front through the diverse shameful passions. They are still rightly submitted to the punishment for their sins, and that's why they are given to the king of Babylon, as punishing power which enjoys of tormenting the nature. Thus, the king of Egypt is the raffish and lover of pleasure mind; the Moabite is the caressed and defiled mind; the Ammonite is the mind indulged to the avarice; the Syrian is the superstitious and dialectic (quarrelsome) mind, because it was said that only the Syrian stood against Solomon<sup>195</sup>, namely against the peace and wisdom (4); the king of Tyr is the mind loving of world and life; and the other kings each of them symbolizes what the wise (gnostic) man can realize, seeking their meaning by himself through the interpretation of their name, or of the places where they are remembered, or taking heed at the way in which they live, or at their occupations, or at their special enmity towards Israel. Because not always and not all of them must be interpreted according to the same meaning, but according to the need asked for by the circumstances, and according to the meaning of the prophecy.

For the Scripture understands through the Pharaoh once the devil and the law of the nature some other time. The first meaning is give to it when it wants to destroy Israel and the next one when Joseph serves from above according to the order, which prophetically embodies the God Word Who willingly serves our nature and passions, except the sin. Also the king of Tyr is once understood as the devil and some other

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<sup>195</sup> I Kings: 13: 25: KJB: "And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria."; III Kings: ROB: "And he hated Israel during all the days of Solomon and, besides the evil that Haddad caused to the last one, Rezon always brought harm to Israel and made himself king in Syria."

time as the natural law. The first meaning is given to him when he fights against Israel through Sisara<sup>196</sup>, and the second one when becomes friend of David and helps David to build the godlike temple<sup>197</sup>. And many other meanings are given to the kings listed by the Holy Scripture, according to which sense the prophecy has it.

And the beasts, which are given by God to the king of Babylon, are the devils, each of which works, according to his innate skillfulness, at the bringing of one or of another temptation. Because each one of them is the sower of other evilness and each of them is more cunning than the other one and more skillful towards some sort of evilness. But the demons themselves cannot serve in any way to the devil, the beginner of all evilness, without the permission from God. It ought that God Himself to allow this, as only He knows, in His care for the world and in His love for people, to allow to the devil to bring, through his servants, diverse punishments upon us for the committed sins. This is clearly shown in the history of Job, where it is said that the devil couldn't approach Job without the permission of God<sup>198</sup>.

But also Nebuchadnezzar himself, the king of Babylon, it is often understood as the natural law. This is shown by the letter addressed to the inhabitants from Jerusalem, the ones who, by not being able to fulfill the spiritual law, they were moved in the land of Babylon, namely in the habit of the earthly confusion. They ask to those ones to pray for the life of

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<sup>196</sup> Jews: 4: 2: KJB: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."; ROB: "For it was preached to us as to those ones, but the word of the preaching wasn't useful to them, by not being united with the faith to the ones who heard it."

<sup>197</sup> II Samuel: 5: 11: KJB: "And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house."; II Kings: ROB: "At that time, Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent messengers to David and cedar wood, carpenters, stone carvers and masons, and those ones made a house to David."

<sup>198</sup> Job: 1: 12: KJB: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord."; ROB: "Then the Lord said to Satan: "Behold, everything that he has is in your power; only upon him you do not put forth your hand". And Satan perished from the front of God."

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and for the life of Balthazar, his son, namely for the natural law and for its habituation with the deed (5), under which they fell yesteryear, “to be their days as the days of the sky”<sup>199</sup>. Through these words they ask to the ones who still remained in the dispassionate state of the virtue and in the truth of the knowledge to pray for being the thoughts of the natural law and of its habituation with the deed, under which they have ended by forsaking the law of the ghost, like the godlike thoughts of the spiritual law, calling the thoughts as “days”, and the spiritual law as “sky”. Namely they were praying to God, to not be removed by the spiritual law from the natural and tiresome law under they have reached (6).

With these ones is consumed also the word which Daniel secretly said it to Nebuchadnezzar, as godlike threatening, when he interpreted the vision from the dream: And I will banish you from among the people, and your dwelling will be with the wild beasts; and I will feed you with grass like an ox and you will sleep under the dew of the sky; and seven years will pass over you until you will know that the Most High reigns over the kingdom of people and He gives it whomsoever He wants. And because He said: let the corner of the roots of the tree in soil, your kingdom it will remain to you and from it you will know the heavenly kingdom”<sup>200</sup>.

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<sup>199</sup> Baruch: 1: 11: ROB: “And you are praying for the life of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and for Balthasar, his son, to be their days as the days of the sky on earth.” (the Book of Baruch is not present in the content of KJB (E. l. t.’s n.))

<sup>200</sup> Daniel: 4: **25-26**: KJB: “That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. // And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.”; **22-23**: ROB: “That you will be banished from among the people and you will live together with the animals of the field and you will eat grass and from the dew of the sky you will be watered and seven years will pass over you, until you will know that the Most High has the mastery over the people’s kingdom and He gives it whomsoever He wants. // And if He commanded to let the stump and the roots of the tree, it means that your kingdom will be protected for you immediately that you will know that the sky has the mastery.”

Through banishment maybe he understands the removal from paradise into this world, for transgressing the commandment, and the falling from living with the holy angels, namely from the spiritual views, under the power of the natural law founded on feeling. And the inhabiting with the wild beasts it means the living with the passions and with the devils which work. The grass with which they fed him (the angels, say some codices, or the people, say others, and not the beasts with which he had his dwelling, because those ones not feed someone, but tear him apart), it means the natural knowledge through feeling of the things and the tiring work of the virtue; this ones are provided as a grass, the angel to the people.

And “you will sleep under the dew of the sky” it means having, by the godlike Providence, the power which is in these ones. “The dew of the sky” indicated the Providence, which destines to the man in this age, besides all those listed before, the preservation in existence; or the law of the nature, which remains totally unbroken; or maybe the knowledge in part of the intelligible ones, which is mediated to us by the seen things through the grace of God and which sustains here the man in the hope for the future ones.

The words “seven years will pass over you” indicated the extent of the sevenfold cycle of the times in this age. Under this cycle the nature has fallen, because hasn’t kept the habit and its own work, but after the end of this cycle, at the expected resurrection, it will come back again to itself, by rejecting the beastly (irrational) characteristics, receiving again the glory of the Kingdom from the beginning, after has known, through the oikonomia of the Providence from this age, the mastery of the true kingdom (7). Because through the words: “let the corner of the roots of the tree in the soil”, it is shown that the seed and the powers of the goodness<sup>201</sup> are not fully plucked out due to the mistake from the beginning. Due to these ones, the nature resuming its growth comes back through resurrection to the natural glory and beauty from before.

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<sup>201</sup> Through the falling into the sin the godlike image doesn’t totally disappear into the man.

But the best thing is to listen to the law of the commandments and to learn to distinguish our bodily thought through the willing toils. And this is not only a good thing, but also very wise and pious to the ones who have made their innate rationality master over the passions. And if we don't do this thing, let us unwillingly be rebuked, and let's receive with the due thanksgiving the will of the One Who rebukes us, as some sort of yoke of the king of Babylon, towards punishing the sins that we have committed. And then the spiritual king of Babylon will not move our mind from our land, namely from our faith, from our hope and from our habituation with the virtue. So in this meaning, shown before, the devil is also called "the servant of God" and in this meaning the kings of the peoples, the king of Judah and the beasts of the land are given on his hand.

### Scholia

1. He explains in how the devil is enemy and avenger of God.

2. The toil and the trouble clean the soul defiled by the filthiness of the pleasure and totally pluck out the affection of the soul for the material things, unveiling to the soul the damage that it comes out from the love for them. That's why God allows to the devil, after a right judgment, to upset people with all sort of troubles.

3. The one who suffers because he has neglected the grace of God, if he recognize the rationality of the Providence which tries to heal him, he received the trouble with thanksgiving and with joyfulness, and he corrects the mistake for which he is rebuked. But the one who proves himself insensitive to this medicine that is given to him, he rightly is removed out from grace and delivered to the confusion of the passions, letting him to come to the sin with the deed, towards which he was carried by his internal desire.

4. Solomon had the peace through the meaning of the name, and the wisdom through the gift of God, as fruit of the prayer.

5. Nebuchadnezzar means here the natural law, and Balthasar, his son, the habituation with the natural law.

6. It is shown from the prayer that Nebuchadnezzar and Balthasar mean here the natural law, and the habit born out of it, but not the devil. Because nobody says that it is made prayer for the devil. A prayer which the prophetic word didn't condemn, we must not believe that it was brought to God for the devil.

7. The nature will return to itself, regaining the lack of the sin and the incorruptibility. Because the sinners, namely the causes of the sin, they will perish, and everybody will be without sin and through this without corruption; because these ones are born one from another. And everybody will know the true kingdom, some people through enlightenment, others through damnation. But not all of them will enjoy the goods, and the ones who will enjoy of them will not enjoy in the same way.

### **Question 27**

*Once the Lord clearly commanded that after the resurrection all the nations<sup>202</sup> to be taught, why Peter needed the unveiling in the case of Cornelius<sup>203</sup>? And why the Apostles from Jerusalem, hearing the things regarding Cornelius, differed from Peter?<sup>204</sup>*

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<sup>202</sup> Mathew: 28: 19: KJB: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."; ROB: "Therefore, by going, teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

<sup>203</sup> Acts: 10: 11: KJB: "And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth."; ROB: "And he saw the heaven opened and something big descending as a big sheet of cloth, tied on four corners, coming down to earth."

<sup>204</sup> Acts: 11: 1 and the followings.

## **Answer**

Saint Peter, the greatest of the Apostles, was in great need for an unveiling regarding the nations. Because he didn't know that there isn't any difference between circumcision and the lack of it, in what concerns the faith. Namely, he didn't know clearly if the Lord said to be taught the nations, without being compelled to serve the external law, until the Lord showed to him the mystery of His hidden counsel. Only this convinced him, through the symbol of the cloth, that the grace of the Holy Ghost is given also to the nations, as to himself, only through faith, and so into Christ there is no difference between Jew and Hellene. But neither the Apostles from Jerusalem knew about this. That's why they differed from him, until they also found the hidden richness of godlike mercy regarding all the people. Because the grace of the preaching brought a new life and a new ministration, different from the one of the law, and a teaching of the soul, that makes the man, willingly and out of his own decision, to liberate himself from the body, as well as a more godlike birth from another spring (1). But just for this cause the ones appointed to the job of preaching needed at every word the teaching of the One Who sent them. And if I do not seem to somebody more scrupulous than I should, each word of the godlike teaching needed a teaching and an unveiling which to decide the way in which must be fulfilled (2). Because there is in no way somebody to know the manner to apply a word, without the unveiling from the One Who uttered that word (3). Knowing this also the famous Peter, after he received from the Lord the commandment of preaching among the nations, he didn't start to work, but he waited for being taught the mode for applying the commandment, by the One Who gave the commandment.

But, maybe there were also other things that Peter ought to learn through the cloth descended from heaven and through the diverse animals contained in it. Better said, maybe there were things which must be learnt by the entire mankind,

or by any man who, like Peter, reaching at the ultimate height of the faith, learns clearly how to totally quench any feeling, because until he watches through it the seen ones, he knows the creation as one which breaks by itself, not being possible to protect it against corruption and confusion. So, through the cloth and through the beasts on it, God unveiled to Peter as spiritual food the seen world, understood through the unseen one, on the ground of its rationalities, or the unseen ones shown through the images of the sensitive things. That's why He says to Peter: "Rise Peter, do sacrifice and eat"<sup>205</sup>. Where from is commanded to him? Where from but from the habituation and form the chains of the feeling (perception through the senses) and out of a low prejudgment about the things, or out of the seemed righteousness of the law, as being liberated from the hallucinations of the senses, to be able to see only with the mind the rationalities of the sensitive things, disrobed of images, and so to know the types of the intelligible ones, and to learn that nothing of the ones made by God isn't unclean. Because the one who contemplates the creation seen in its rationalities, as a showing of intelligible one, or the types of the intelligible ones out of the adornment of the seen things, as a cloth which descends from above, he will not consider anything unclean out of the seen things, not observing in their rationalities anything to cause disgust (4). Because, the corruption is in the sensitive side, as well as also the war of the creature one with another. Between the rationalities, though, there is no enmity.

The cloth, held by the four corners, it is so the sensitive world also held by the four elements<sup>206</sup>. And the crawling creatures, the beasts and the birds, are the different rationalities of the creatures, which are unclean for the feeling, but are clean for the mind and good to be eaten, sustaining the spiritual life. At last, the voice repeated for three times it the

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<sup>205</sup> Acts: 10: 13: KJB: "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."; ROB: "And there was a voice towards him: By rising you up, Peter, stab and eat."

<sup>206</sup> Earth, air, water, fire.

active philosophy (the practical one), the natural one and the theological one<sup>207</sup>. Because, the one who truly wants to follow to God, must not only once, but two times and three times, to rise himself up and to sacrifice the seen creation and to eat it through the knowledge (in a gnostic way). Thus, the one who has risen himself up from the passionate attachment to the sensitive ones, he has sacrificed their movement and he succeeded to eat the active virtue<sup>208</sup>. The one who has risen himself up from the liar opinion about the things, he has sacrificed the seen norms and, by eating the unseen rationalities, he has achieved the natural contemplation, the one in ghost. And the one who has risen himself from the polytheistic error, he has sacrificed the being of the things itself and, eating by faith their cause, he has been filled up by the power of the theological knowledge (of God).

So, the whole contemplative mind, having the sword of the ghost, which is the Word (the Rationality) of God, after he killed in himself the movement of the seen creation, he has achieved the virtue, and after he cut off from himself the hallucination of the sensitive forms, he has found the truth in the rationalities of the things, this constituting the natural contemplation.

Or, maybe God commanded to the most praised Peter, the greatest of the Apostles, that, rising himself out from the limited power of the nature to that godlike power according to the grace, to sacrifice with the help of God, through the sword of the word, the passions of the evilness from inside men and then to make them the Word a good and well pleased food towards spiritual digestion through the rejection of the passionate and beastly life from before. Because it is said that the blood which flows out of any stabbed animal it is the symbol of the life. And the diversity of the animals shown of that cloth it means, maybe, the diversity of the passion from

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<sup>207</sup> The three stages of the spiritual ascension.

<sup>208</sup> He is not troubled anymore by the movements caused within man by the seen things, and he has achieved the virtue with the deed.

within people. The crawling ones show the ones of whose lust crawls among the earthly things; the beasts, the ones who light with wrath their whole anger to destroy each other; and the birds, the ones who push their entire rational power towards the offense of the pride and towards the haughtiness which is born out of it, as also the one who speak injustice towards the high ones and raise their mouth to the heavens. These being sacrificed, as a together worker of God, by the Great Peter, through the word of the Ghost, he made the first ones desiring the heavenly ones, and the others gentle and lovers of people and with tolerance to each other, and the last ones lovers of God and humble in their thought.

Let's see now what wants to show through her name Ioppe, in which the Most Holy Peter, the great foundation of the Church, had this vision? The name Ioppe is interpreted as observation post, designating the watching which we ought to grant it to the facts (6). Because the city, being at the shore of the sea, would have been washed by many waves if would have not been built on high ground. For this reason I reckon that through it is indicated the one who builds his virtue, like a city, on the height of the knowledge and who is though not far from the unwilling temptations, because he hasn't totally shaken off yet the bond (affection) with the sensitive things, but it has it almost as a sea and that's why he needs an observation post, lest the unclean devils, secretly using the unwilling temptations, to facilitate the penetration of the willing passions. But Ioppe belongs to the tribes of Issachar, and this being translated as "payment" or "toil", it can also mean the habituation in supervising the deeds, guarding them against the unseen rushing over of the evil spirits. To the great Apostle it was commanded, consequently, to raise his mind from this one<sup>209</sup>, and to move it towards the knowledge of the higher ones.

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<sup>209</sup> Apostle Peter and everyone who has achieved habituation in virtue, let them not remain here, but go higher to the superior stage of the knowledge.

Therefore, the ones who is on the height from where he oversees the active philosophy, we can say about him that he is in Joppa; and the one who inhabits the Zion from Jerusalem, namely in the place from where the peace is seen (for so is the name Jerusalem interpreted), he is far from any affection towards the sensitive ones, as geographically the sea is far from the place where the Zion is. This one, being placed on the height of the knowledge, he looks only at the intelligible views of the existences, removing with the mind the seen forms of the things. Consequently he receives in the clearest way possible the visions of the godlike things, which give to his mind a more godlike form. Therefore, the one who inhabit Joppa is the man of the deeds (*πράκτικος*), who is watching the traps of the enemy, and the one who lives in Zion it the man of the knowledge (*γνωστικός*) who contemplates with the mind only the beauty of the godlike things<sup>210</sup>.

And if the cloth is again kidnapped to heaven, we must understand through this that after God showed to the great Peter the godlike rationalities of the sensitive things, which exist in the same place with the intelligible ones, He pulls them again to Himself, showing to us in this way that nothing is unclean from the one of which rationalities are at Him. That's why, the great Apostle understanding the sense of the ones seen by him, he learnt that he must not reckon unclean any man and at God there is no judgment according to the countenance, on the basis of which He would make an unfair division of the creatures. Because of this reason, not postponing it anymore, he accomplished the spiritual commandment, sacrificing towards the spiritual life the ones who willingly circumcise their heart, through the word of the grace, and they reject the entire uncleanness of the faithlessness, of the evilness and of the nescience, as would be a foreskin, without cutting off from the body anything of those which the body has by nature, being given that these ones

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<sup>210</sup> The inhabitant from Joppa is the one on the stage of the virtues, and the one from Jerusalem is the one from the stage of the contemplation.

didn't take their existence out from the passionate tendency of the will, but they have their origin in the godlike creation. Because, nothing from the proper to the nature ones are unclean, having God as their cause.

## Scholia

1. The mystery of the New Testament is announced like a changing of the life, like angelic ministration, like willing estrangement of the soul from the body and as beginning of the godlike transformation in ghost.

2. Something else is, he says, the rationality (the word) of the commandment and something else is the way in which the commandment must be fulfilled. So, the great Peter receiving commandment to evangelize the nations, he found out the way of executing the commandment, which he didn't know, through the cloth, learning that the calling of the nations must be made without circumcision, as also without the other more bodily norms of the law. Because the Scripture doesn't know but the spiritual circumcision, namely the cutting off of the passionate affection of the soul for the body.

3. Any word of the godlike commandment needs teaching regarding to the way in which to be that word fulfilled, thing called by the godlike Apostle as "competence".

4. The one who doesn't remain for the sake of the feeling at the images of the seen things, but he seeks their rationalities with the mind, as types of the intelligible realities, or he contemplates the rationalities of the sensitive things, he learns that nothing from the seen ones is unclean. For all of them are very good by nature<sup>211</sup>.

5. The one who doesn't change himself together with the movement of the things that fall under the senses, he occupies himself with the unspotted deeds of the virtues. And

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<sup>211</sup> Genesis: 1: 31: KJB: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."; ROB: "And God looked at everything He made and behold they were very good. And was evening and was morning: the sixth day."

the one who doesn't let his mind shaped by their images, he has achieved the true knowledge about things; at last, the one who has penetrated with the understanding beyond even the being of the things, he has reached, as the best theologian, in an unknown way around of the Monad. Consequently, the one who has sacrificed for three times within himself the creation of the seen things, he has made himself worthy of the stage of the consummated ones<sup>212</sup>.

6. Joppa is, he says, the habituation into virtue, which guards against any approach of some harm from the neighbor sensitive things. And the Zion is the habituation into knowledge, which sees how the gifts of the understanding are received.

### **Question 28**

*To whom said God: "Come to descend and to mix their languages"?*<sup>213</sup>

### **Answer**

The Holy Scripture imagines God according to the disposition that is in the ones of whom it takes care (1). So is called also lion and bear and leopard and panther and man and ox and sheep and sun and star and fire and ghost and other countless things, God not being any of these ones, but being

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<sup>212</sup> Here we have again the three stages of the spiritual ascension. Each of them represents a new detachment from the things that fall under the senses (a new sacrificing of them). The one from the stage of the virtue doesn't change himself together with their movement, namely he isn't happy for achieving them or sad for losing them, namely for their producing or for their disappearance. The one from the stage of the natural contemplation he has detached his cogitation from the slavery of the sensitive images of the things. And the one who mysteriously know God, he has forgotten even about the intelligible rationalities of the things, namely about their being.

<sup>213</sup> Genesis: 11: 7: KJB: "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."; ROB: "Let's, therefore, to descend and to mix their languages, so that they don't understand each other anymore".

though according with the force and with the characteristic presented by each of these. For instance, showing Himself to Abraham, who was consummated in knowledge, God taught him that in the rationality of the unity is encompassed the immaterial rationality of the Trinity. And this is because Abraham totally went with the mind out from the matter and from its forms. That's why he showed Himself as Three and spoke as One<sup>214</sup>. And to Lot, who still didn't clean his mind of the composition of the things composed out of matter and form, and believed that God is only the Maker of the seen world, He unveiled Himself to him as two-ness, and not as Trinity, indicating through the shapes in which He clothed Himself that the mind which He wants to teach it has not come out yet from matter and form. In this way, if you had penetrated with understanding the rationalities of each of the places where the Scripture shows God in diverse way, you would have found out as cause of His continuous change of the countenances, the disposition of the ones of whom He take care.

In the present case, the ones who were building the tower, they started from before out from the sunrise's country from east, namely from the unique and true knowledge about God, and they came in the land of Shinar, name that is translated as "cursed teeth", falling down in all sort of opinions about Godhead. By gathering here all the opinions, as some bricks, they started to build, like a tower, the polytheistic faithlessness. For this reason, rightly, God, who scatters the unity of the unity of the sinful together-speaking of the people that went astray, He calls Himself here at the plural, according to their disposition, which was divided and scattered in endless opinions. Through this He shows that, in them He has been

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<sup>214</sup> Genesis: 18: 1-2: KJB: "AND the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; // And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,"; ROB: "Then the Lord showed Himself again to Abraham at the oak of Mamre, in a day around noon, when he sat in the door of his tent. // Then raising his eyes, he looked and behold three Men stood before him; and when he saw Him, he ran from the threshold of his tent to welcome Them and he bowed to Them to the ground."

divided in many. This He shows it also in Adam's case, by saying: "Behold, Adam has become like One of Us"<sup>215</sup>. So, according to the man's each time state, God is shown by the Scripture either as plural or as unity. And at the question to whom God speaks, one can answer that is the custom of the Scripture to show the unspoken and hidden counsels of God in a bodily way, to be us able to understand the godlike ones with the help of the words and voices that are familiar to us, because in Himself God is an unknown Mind, unspoken Word and boundless Life; He neither speaks nor allows to be Himself spoken, being the words itself and Himself by nature. If we will understand in this way the sayings of the godlike Scripture, we won't impede on any word of the written ones, on the motif of darkness.

But somebody could say that in no way the plural number related to God, it isn't in the Scripture in an irreproachable way. And towards strengthening his opinion he could bring the word: "And God said: «Let us make man in our image and in our likeness»"<sup>216</sup>, by declaring that through this word we cannot understand that the Scripture introduces the polytheistic idea. To this we respond: When the Holy Scriptures talks about God at plural, addressing itself piously to the pious ones, it makes it to indicate that three hypostasis; namely the Scripture shown mysteriously the way of the existence of the All-Holy Trinity, without beginning and consubstantial, being given that the All-Glorified, Worshipped and All-Praised Trinity

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<sup>215</sup> Genesis: 3: 22: KJB: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:"; ROB: "And the Lord God said: "Behold, Adam has become like One of Us, knowing the good and the evil. And now, lest he will be able to put forth his hand and to take fruits out of the tree of the life, to eat and to live forever!..."

<sup>216</sup> Genesis: 1: 26: KJB: "And God said, **Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:** and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."; ROB: "And God said: "Let us make man in Our image and in Our likeness, to master the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the domestic animals, all the creatures which crawls on earth and the whole earth!"

of the hypostases it is the fullest unity by nature. Because our God in unity in Trinity and Trinity in unity. When though, the Scripture speaks about God at plural towards the faithful ones, it condemns the false idea about Godhead of these ones, because these ones reckon that the difference of the personal characteristics is existential, not hypostatical. And by thinking in the Godhead in this way, it proved that they sustain the polytheistic error (2).

And if we won't convince them by saying this, we will please the Ghost and the ones who love the Ghost, avoiding the strife and understanding the Holy Scripture in accordance with them. So we will also say that it show the Most Holy Trinity when it says: "Let us make man" (because the existence of the created ones is the work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost), some other times as rewarder of the ones who live in faith listening to its laws, of a the Providence Does of the ones who have received the existence from it, as He showed Himself to Abraham as Three and spoke to him as One, and some other times as a punisher one, or a judge of the ones who have transgressed the laws of nature, like when it says: "By descending, let us confound their languages". Because the Holy and of One Being Trinity hasn't created only the creatures, but sustains them also, and shares to everyone His gifts according to his worthiness. Because being the Trinity only One God, creator by nature, the Trinity is also the Providence Doer and the judge of the ones made by the Trinity. Because as it is common to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost to create, as so it is common to Them to judge and to assure the Providence for the created ones.

### Scholia

1. To each one, he says, God shows Himself according to the opinion that that man has it about God. To the ones who have passed with the desire of their heart beyond the

composition of the material bodies, and they have harmonized the powers of their soul in one unique and constant movement around God, the Trinity shows Himself to them as unity, to show to them His existence and to mysteriously teach them the way of His existence. And to them who move their desire only around the affection around the bodily ones and they have the powers of their soul divided between themselves, God show Himself to them not as He is, but as they are, proving them as remained with both hands holding our duality, on the ground of which bodily world is composed from matter and form.

2. The one who says that the difference of the personal characteristics of God is existential, and not hypostatical, he is not monotheist but polytheist instead, because he sustains that God receives through these characteristics a number of beings and not a number of hypostases.

### **Question 29**

*What does it mean the word from the Acts: “And they were telling to Paul through the Holy Ghost to not go up to Jerusalem”<sup>217</sup>, and why he didn’t listen to the Ghost and went up to Jerusalem?*

### **Answer**

Saint Isaiah the prophet says in his prophecy that seven Ghosts will rest upon the Savior, Who will spring out from the Jesse’s root. Of course he doesn’t sustain the existence of seven Ghosts<sup>218</sup>, to teach also other to think like that, but he called “Ghosts” the works of the One and the Same Holy Ghost,

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<sup>217</sup> Acts: 21: 4: KJB: “

<sup>218</sup> Isaiah: 11: 2: KJB: “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;”; ROB: “And the Ghost of God will rest upon Him, the ghost of the wisdom and of the understanding, the ghost of the counsel and of the strength, the ghost of the knowledge of the good faith.”

because in each work the Holy Ghost is whole and without diminution, Who works, on the measure of the one in whom He works (1). And the godlike Apostle calls the diverse works of the same Holy Ghost as charisms, worked by one and the same Ghost<sup>219</sup>. Therefore, if so each one it is given the showing of the Ghost on the measure of the faith from within him, through the impartation of such a charisma, it is proven that each of the believers receives the work of the Holy Ghost on the measure of the faith and according to the disposition from his soul, this work endowing him with the habit (aptitude) which makes him able to fulfill this or that commandment (2).

So, as one receives word of wisdom (the rationality of the wisdom), another word of knowledge, the third word of faith, and other again another from the Ghost's charisms listed by the Godlike Apostle, likewise, one receives through the ghost the charisma of the perfect love, unmediated and free of all the material things towards God on the measure of his faith, another through the same Ghost the charisma of the perfect love for the neighbor and again, another, as I said, something else through the same Ghost, having each of them in work (to work it) his own charisma. And these charisms if somebody will call them ghosts as Saint Isaiah did, I reckon that he doesn't fall out of the truth. Because in each charisma, either it is greater, or it is smaller, there is working, on the measure of the one in who works, the Holy Ghost.

So, rightly the great Paul, who was called by God servant of His mysteries on people's account, once he received unmediated the ghost of the perfect grace of the love for God, on the measure of his faith, he didn't listen to the ones who received the charisma of the perfect love for him (3), who were telling him through the "ghost", namely through the charisma of the love for him, taken in them by the Ghost (because the ghost and the charisma are the same, as I said, teaching out of the word of the prophet) to not go up to Jerusalem. And this

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<sup>219</sup> I Corinthians: 12: 4: KJB: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."; ROB: "The gifts are different, but the same Ghost."

was because he valued the godlike and above understanding love, a lot more than others` love for him. Better said, he didn`t go up by not listening, but instead he elevated through his personal example the desire of the ones who were prophesying through the charisma of through the work of the Ghost give to them with measure, towards the love which if above all. So one cannot say that the great Paul didn`t listen to the Ghost, but he taught the ones who were prophesying about Him through the charisma of the love, to go up from a smaller charisma of the Ghost to a higher one.

Or again, if the charisma of prophesying is far behind the apostolic charisma, wasn`t appropriate to the rationality, which guides them and orders the fire of each of them, to be oriented what is above according to what is lower, but rather what is below ought to listen to what is above. Because the ones who were prophesying through the Ghost of prophesying, and not through the apostolic one, they announced the way of the sufferance which Saint Paul followed to endure it because of the preaching. But he, looking only at the godlike target, doesn`t give any importance to the ones from the middle (4). Because the whole his care was not how to pass through the ones that are going to happen to him, but how to become himself another Christ, accomplishing according to the example of Christ, all those ones for which Christ chose, for the love for people, the life into body. Therefore, the seemed disobedience of Paul isn`t but a keeping of the good order, which governs and guides all the godlike ones and which makes everyone to steadfastly stay at his own place. It is a clear teaching to not be confounded the stages of the Church, so rightly ordered by the Ghost.

### Scholia

1. The One Who works in a different way in each of the ones bettered by Him in a different manner, He is whole and undivided in all of them because the Holy Ghost shows Himself as working not-confounded and undivided way in everybody

and in anyone through one and the same power, being the accomplisher of everything. And this is because He is God, above being, and cannot be encompassed even by all things together.

2. Any habit (aptitude), through which a commandment is fulfilled, he calls it a charisma.

3. The one who loves God from all his heart, from all his soul and with all his power, this one is greater, he says, than the one who loves the neighbor. So it is not rational that what is greater to be oriented after what is smaller, but is better that what is smaller to be oriented after what is greater. That's why the godlike Apostle rightly didn't allow to be the apostolic dignity and honor dominated by the stages over which it was dominating, lest the good order of the things – and especially of the godlike ones - to be broken.

4. The ones from the middle are the different trials, which were foreseen by the ones who were prophesying, through the Ghost, to the Saint Paul, the sufferings which he was going to endure for the truth. But he didn't care about these ones, and he hurried up to unite with Christ, with the unveiled hypostasis of the goods, after he will pass through faith beyond the created ones.

### Question 30

*What does it mean: “Can you drink the cup that I drink and can you be baptized with the Baptism I am baptized with?”<sup>220</sup> What the difference between the cup and the baptism is?*

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<sup>220</sup> Mark: 10: 38: KJB: “But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”, ROB: “But Jesus answered to them: You do not know what are you asking for! Can you drink the cup that I drink or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

## Answer

The baptism of the Lord is the image of our willing toils for virtue, through which erasing the stains from on the conscience, we willingly kill the inclination of our will towards the ones which are seen. And the cup is the image of the unwilling trials, which come upon us in times of tribulations because we stand in the service of the truth and by enduring those trials, placing the sake for God even above life, we willingly consent even to the forced death of our being (1).

**Today, 17.02.2017, I've just found out from radio Trinitas that in this morning, around seven o'clock, Madam Lidia Stăniloae passed the way. God rest Her in peace.**

Consequently this is the difference between Baptism and cup, that the Baptism kills our leaning towards the pleasures of the life, by the sake of the virtue, and the cup convinces the pious ones to put the truth above even the life. He has placed the cup before the Baptism, for the virtue is for the truth, and not the truth for the virtue (2). That's why the one who cultivates the virtue for the truth, it is not wounded by the arrows of the vain glory; but the one who struggles for the truth by the sake of the virtue, he open within himself a dwelling place of the self-appreciation of the vain glory<sup>221</sup>.

## Scholia

1. The Lord's Baptism, he says, is the perfect killing of our inclination towards the senses' world; and the chalice is the denial even of the life from here, for the truth.

2. The truth, he says, is godlike knowledge; and the virtue, the fight for the truth of the ones who want it. Therefore,

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<sup>221</sup> Like the Eucharist follows after the Baptism, so the knowing of the truth follows after the virtue, as a higher stair. Through Baptism or through virtue, we kill our egotistic will, but we don't kill the energy of the virtue. Through the impartation with the truth, we forget about ourselves, even as subjects of the virtue, to not be living anymore but the truth.

the one who endures the toils of the virtues for the knowledge; he is not enslaved to the vain glory because he knows that the truth by its nature remains above all toils. For the truth by nature cannot be comprised by the last ones. But the one who seeks the knowledge for the sake of the toils for it, he surely enslaves himself to the vain glory, as one who believes that he has taken the crown before the sweats, not knowing that the toils are for the crown, and not the crown for the toils. Any method is proven reckless when, instead of reaching through it to what is absolute (for itself), it is believed as an absolute thing (for itself).

### **Question no. 31**

*"If "God doesn't dwell in temples made by hands", how did He live in the Jews` temple?"*

### **Answer**

God, most wisely taking care of the ones cared by the providence, according to their state, first he guided the men towards truth through images, because they governed themselves according to the senses, in this manner he mixed Himself in an unseen way in all the types given to the old people, working to the elevation of the guided ones. He dwelled therefore in the temple of the Jews in a figurative mode, but not in a real mode, circumscribing through this dwelling in the temple His unspoken advice regarding the mysterious advising of the ones cared by providence. For the most appropriate dwelling place of God is only the clean mind. For the mind, God allowed to be built the temple as type, wanting that through much thickened symbols to detach the Jews` mind from the (material) matter, which was more thickened than the lifeless types. He wanted to make it to see its helplessness to be dwelling place of God due to its materiality and due to the

division of which was dominated and through this to come to the knowledge of its natural features. This thing not being understood by the Jew, who didn't know else but only to nourish through pride his pious haughtiness, he was deprived also by type and he estranged himself from truth in a sinful way (1).

### Scholia

1. Jew is, he says, the one who cultivates only the shape of the conscience, which is the empty word and only the image of the virtues, which is the habit without soul. He boasts himself with the images of the truth.

### Question no. 32

*What does it mean: "If somebody will ferret, he would find God?"<sup>222</sup> How somebody, by ferreting, finds God?*

### Answer

The one who doesn't stop himself at the seen side of the bodily serving of the law, but, by penetrating through the ways of the mind in each of the seen symbols, he finds out the divine perfect rationality, hidden in everyone, and in this rationality he find God Himself. Ferreting well through the power of the mind in the matter of the law's prescriptions, as in a pile of mixed things, he will find somewhere hidden in the flesh of the law the pearl-rationality, which totally escapes to the feeling. Likewise also the one who doesn't circumscribe the nature of the seen ones only to what the feeling comprises, but he studies wisely with the mind the rationality from each creature, he discover God, finding out from the shown greatness of the things their cause itself.

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<sup>222</sup> Acts: 17: 27.

Being given therefore that the own feature of the one who ferrets is the discernment, which penetrates through knowledge into the symbols of the law and contemplates with science the seen nature of the things, that one discerns the things from the Scripture, from creation and from himself. Into the Scripture are discerned the letter and the ghost, into the creation the rationality and what is seen at the surface, and in himself the mind and the rationality. Then, by taking from the Scripture the Ghost, from the creation the rationality and from himself the mind, and by uniting them together indissolubly, he finds God, knowing Him as much as it is appropriate and as much it is possible into the mind, into rationality and into ghost. This is because he has liberated himself of everything that estrange him and draw him towards all sort of opinions, namely of the letter, of the seen surface of the things and of feeling, in which stays the quantitative side of the things, so diverse and adversary to the unity. But if somebody mixes and weaves the letter of the law, the surface of the things and the own feeling, he is like a short-sighted man, suffering of the illness of not knowing the cause of the things (1).

### Scholium

1. The one who sees from the Scripture only the ghost without images and from the creation the rationalities without shapes, with the mind liberated from working the feeling, he has found God; in the ghost of the Scripture like the cause of the goodness, in the rationalities of the things like the one of the power, and in himself like he one of the wisdom. For the created from nothing rationalities tell about the power of the Creator; the ghost of the Scripture, bringing back the estranged ones to godhead, He announces the goodness of the One Who wrote it; and our mind, by receiving into itself in a not-

separated manner the rationalities of the created ones, reveals the wisdom of the Builder<sup>223</sup>.

### Question no. 33

*What does it mean” Amen I say to you, that anybody who will say to this mountain: raise and through yourself into the sea, and he will not differ into his heart, but he will believe that what he says it will be done, it will be to him what he has said”<sup>224</sup>? What does it mean: “and he will not differ”?*

### Answer

The godlike and great Apostle, defining what the faith is, he says: “The faith is the hypostasis of the hoped ones and the proof of the unseen things”<sup>225</sup>. And if something would define it like an inward asset, or like true knowledge, proving of the mysterious assets, he wouldn’t commit sin against truth. Finally, the Lord, teaching about the mysterious things and about the hoped and unseen ones, He says: “the Kingdom of God is inside you”<sup>226</sup>. Therefore the faith in God is the same

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<sup>223</sup> Sophia is the unitary content of all rationalities. The prime and perfect Sophia from ever is the divine Logos. But then any mind becomes Sophia, according to its progress in gathering of all the rationalities in itself and in their depth.

<sup>224</sup> Mark: 11: 23: KJB: “23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”; ROB: “Verily I say to you that whosoever will say to this mountain: raise yourself up and throw yourself into the sea, and he won’t doubt into his heart, but he will believe that what he will say it will be done, whatever he will say it will be to him”.

<sup>225</sup> Hebrews: 1: 11: KJB: “NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”; ROB: “And the faith is the certitude of the hoped ones, the proving o the unseen ones.

<sup>226</sup> Luke: 17: 21: KJB: “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”; ROB: “And they won’t say: Behold it here or there. For, behold, the Kingdom of God is inside you.”

thing with the Kingdom of God. It is different only by cogitation from the kingdom, for the faith is the Kingdom of God without shape, and the Kingdom is the faith which has received in godlike way a shape (1).

Therefore, on the ground of this fact, the faith is not outside us. But we, by cultivating it through the godlike commandments, we make it to become the Kingdom of God, which is known only by the ones who have it. Therefore the Kingdom of God is the faith developed through working. And this Kingdom does the unmediated union with God of the ones who are part of it.

Therefore it has been clearly proven that the faith is a power of connection, which does the consummated, unmediated and above nature union of the one who believes with the believed God (2).

The man, consisting of soul and body, is carried by two laws, of the body and of the ghost. The law of the body has at its disposal the feeling (the work of the senses), and the law of the ghost the work of the mind. The law of the body, working through the feeling, it ties the man to the matter, and the law of the ghost, working through mind, does in an unmediated way the union of the ghost with God. That's why rightly "the one who doesn't discern in his heart", namely who doesn't distinguish with the mind, or doesn't cut off the unmediated union with God, produced through the faith, as one who has become dispassionate, better said god, due to the union through the faith, "he will say to this mountain to move itself and that it will move itself" (3). Through the word "this one" it is indicated the thought and the law of the body, which is truly heavy and difficult to remove, and for the natural power even totally unmoved and unmovable. Because so much its power has rooted itself into the nature of the people through the irrational work of the senses, than many don't even believe that the man is anything else but body, having the feeling as power through which enjoys this life. Therefore everything is possible to the one who believes and discerns, namely he doesn't cut off

the union made through faith between his mind and God, for the sake of the affectionate connection between soul and body, sustained through feeling. For everything which estrange the mind from the world and body and tie it to God, are perfect in their results (4).

### Scholia

1. He calls the simple faith Kingdom without shape, because the one who has it hasn't reached yet to the likeness with God through virtues. And Kingdom is called that faith which has achieved through deeds the godlike shape of the goodness.

2. The faith is a knowledge that cannot be proven. And if it is knowledge that cannot be proven, then the faith is a connection above nature, through which in unknown and not-provable way we are united with God in an above understanding union.

3. When the mind has achieved the unmediated union with God, it totally stops its natural power of cogitating and of cogitate on itself. And when allows this again and cogitates something from the ones which are behind God, it starts discerning the union from above understanding<sup>227</sup>. While the man is in this union with God, as one who has ascended above nature, and has become god through participation, it moves the law of his nature just like an unmoved mountain.

4. Is must be added, he says: "Everything is possible to the one who believes", namely everything that estranges the

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<sup>227</sup> So that union from above nature and cogitation, with God, and the stopping of the natural working of the cogitation it takes place also in this life, but for short periods of time. The union with God and the deification of the man doesn't mean identifying with God according to the nature, but it is lived as a state into which the cogitation of the man doesn't make difference anymore between itself and God, because the cogitation isn't anywhere in function. But into the deified man there remains though the conscience that he isn't either only him, or only God. It is something analogue to the relation of love between two persons. They don't make distinction anymore between me and you. But though they don't live themselves as one, as me or you, but as two, in the same time, as a fullness, as a communion, different from the singular state.

mind from the world and from the body. For these ones are made by God possible to the one who believes.

### Question 34

*What does it mean again: “For this one I am saying to you that everything that you will ask by praying yourselves, believe that you will take it, and it will be to you”<sup>228</sup>? How can somebody believe, that he will take everything that he will ask for, once only God knows if it is profitable what he has, or not? So whether out of nescience he will ask something that isn’t useful to himself, how will He give to him? And if He doesn’t give to him what isn’t useful to him, but asked out of nescience, how can somebody believe that everything he will ask for he will take it and it also be his?*

### Answer

All these questions have been explained shortly in the previous answer. For only to the ones who know how to believe it is given to know what is necessary, and what things to ask for. Because “the knowledge isn’t of anybody”, as also the faith. Besides, the Lord Himself said: “Search firstly the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”, urging us to search before everything the knowledge of the truth and secondly the exercising of the moral duties. Through this he showed clearly that the faithful ones must search only the godlike knowledge and the virtue which it adorns it through deeds. But we just know that many are the things that must be sought in order of the knowledge of God and of the virtue by the ones who believe. For instance: the deliverance of passions, the enduring of the

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<sup>228</sup> Mark: 11: 24; KJB: “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”; ROB: “That’s why I am saying to you: Everything you ask, by praying, believe you that you have received them, and you will have them.”

trials, the rationalities of the virtues, the ways of the works, the uprooting of the affection of the soul for the body, the untying of the senses from the connection (relation) with the sensitive things, the consummated withdrawal of the mind from the created ones and shortly speaking ther innumerable things which are necessary for banishing away the evilness and the nescience for achieving the knowledge and the virtue. That's why righteous word said the Lord: "Everything that you will ask for, believing, you will receive". He thought Himself at everything that helps to the knowledge of God and to virtue, the only ones that must be asked for, with science and faith, by the pious ones. Because all of these are useful and that's why the Lord certainly gives them to the ones who ask for them. Consequently, the ones who asks only for the sake of the faith, namely of the unmediated union with God, all the things that help to that union, he surely will take them. But that one who asks without this purpose, other things, or even the ones mentioned before, he won't receive them. Because he doesn't believe, but as a faithless one, he aims his own glory through the godlike ones.

### **Question no. 35**

*Because the Word has made Himself body, and not only body, but also blood and also bones, and on the other hand it is commanded to us to eat the body and to drink the blood<sup>229</sup>, but do not crush the bones<sup>230</sup>, please tell me what does it mean this threefold division of the Word made man?*

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<sup>229</sup> John: 1: 14; 6: 41; 19: 36.

<sup>230</sup> Exodus: 12: 46: KJB: "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof."; ROB: "It must be eaten in the same house; do not let it for the second day; do not bring the flesh out of the house and do not crush the bones."

## **Answer**

Deciding to descend into the being, like only Him knew, the Word from above being and the Maker of everything that is, he brought the natural rationalities of all the seen and possible to be thought things (intelligible), together with the not-comprised meanings of His own godhead. Among these ones, the rationalities of the cogitated ones are the blood of the Word, and the rationalities of the sensitive ones are His seen body. Therefore the Word being the teacher of all the spiritual rationalities, both of the ones from the seen things, and of the ones from the intelligible realities, according to appropriateness and rightly he gives to the ones worthy to eat, as a body, the science comprised into the rationalities of the seen things, and to drink, as a blood, the knowledge that is in the rationalities of the intelligible ones (1). These ones were prepared by the wisdom in a mystical way even since aforetime, seasoning wine and bringing sacrifices, as it is said in the Proverbs<sup>231</sup>. And the bones, namely the rationalities from above understanding about godhead, which exceed infinitely the whole created nature, it gives them not, the nature of the created ones not having any power to enter in connection (relation) with these ones<sup>232</sup>.

And again, the body of the Word is the true virtue, the blood the knowledge without mistake, and the bones the unspoken theology (the knowledge of God) (2). For as the blood transforms itself into the shape of the body, in the same way the knowledge transforms itself into virtue<sup>233</sup>. And as the bones sustain the blood and the body, in the same way the rationalities from above any understanding, about godhead, being in the bosom of the creatures, create and sustain in an

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<sup>231</sup> I Proverbs: 9: 2: KJB: “She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.”; ROB: “She stabbed cows for the feast, prepared the wine with spices, and set her table”.

<sup>232</sup> Our created nature cannot know through its finite power the ones of God, but only if receives the power of God, as for through Him to know the ones of His.

<sup>233</sup> The general knowledge leads to virtue, and the virtue leads to a special knowledge.

unknown way the beings of the things and give birth to any knowledge and virtue.

And if somebody would tell that both the rationalities of the Judgment and of the Providence can be reckoned the body and the blood, as ones that will be someday eaten and drunk, and the unspoken rationalities about godhead, hidden into those ones, he would say that they are the bones, he hasn't fallen, I believe, from the truth.

Or maybe body of the Word is also the consummated tuning back of the nature to itself and its restoring through virtue and knowledge, the blood, the deification which it will keep it through grace into the eternal happiness, and the bones, the unknown power itself which it will sustain the nature into the eternal happiness through deification.

And if somebody will tell, through a thinner interpretation, that the body is the willing modification through virtues, the blood is the death for truth in time of narrowing, and the bones are the prime rationalities about God, which are inaccessible to us, it will tell also this one correctly and he wouldn't fall down from the due understanding.

### Scholia

1. He speaks about the being, the power and the work of any creature. These ones are seen at all the creatures and through them is known God as Maker, Providence Doer and Judge. Or he speaks about the two parts of which the creatures are composed, namely the matter and the shape of the sensitive ones, or about the being and the accident of the intelligible ones, or about the virtue and the knowledge, through which He made Himself known, to the ones who are worthy, the One Who is above knowledge.

2. The unspoken theology is the total nescience in sense of exceeding, which is so unknown, as are know the ones which are known in a natural way.

3. Through blood he understands the godhead, which will be the life of the ones worthy of it. For the blood is the symbol of the life.

### **Question no. 36**

*What the bodies and the blood of the speechless animal do mean, which the Israelites bringing them to God, they ate the bodies, and not the blood, but they shed it in circle at the foundation of the altar?<sup>234</sup>*

### **Answer**

The ones, who aforetime served to God in the shadow of the law, imagine also the beginners in the awe. For also these ones barely can understand the seen dispositions of the symbols with meaning of types. Being given therefore that not to those ones was firstly given the law, but to us, because through us the law is spiritually consummated, us who live according to the example of Jesus, to search with awe the rationality of the sacrifices from then.

The beginner in awe, learning to know the deeds of the righteousness, he occupies himself only with the doing into all the obedience and the faith, eating the seen ones of the virtues as some bodies (1).

The rationalities of the commandments, which compose the knowledge of the consummated ones (2), he leaves them through faith to God, not being able to stretch himself as the length of the knowledge stretches.

Because the altar is the symbol of God, to Whom all of us bring sacrifice and to Whom we leave the knowledge of the ones which are above our power, to be us living. And the foundation of the altar is the image of the faith into Him, for the

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<sup>234</sup> Deuteronomy: 12: 27 and the followings.

faith is our foundation<sup>235</sup> which bears the whole building of the deeds and of the godlike meanings. Everyone who cannot impart himself through knowledge with the drunkenness of the wine of the godlike wisdom, he does good to shed the rationalities of the knowledge which he doesn't understand next to this foundation, namely to leave to the faith the knowledge of the rationalities which are above his power.

Therefore, like an image of the beginners into awe, the old people eats the bodies of the sacrifices, and the blood (3) they shed it at the foundation of the altar, because, due to the childish thought, they cannot come up to the knowledge of the ones who were being committed mysteriously. But Christ, making Himself to us Hierarch of the future goods<sup>236</sup> and sacrificing Himself as mysterious sacrifice, he gives together His body and His blood to the ones who habituated their senses of the soul in order of the consummation, for being able to distinguish the good and the bad<sup>237</sup>. For the consummated one has passed not only the stage of the beginners, but also of the forerunners<sup>238</sup>, and that's why they don't ignore the rationalities of the things done by him according to the commandment, but by drinking firstly those ones with the ghost (the rationalities), he eats through deeds the whole flesh of the virtues, elevating the understanding of the ones

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<sup>235</sup> Hebrews: 11: 1: KJB: "NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."; ROB: "And the faith is the certitude of the hoped ones, the proving of the unseen things".

<sup>236</sup> Hebrews: 9: 11: KJB: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;"; ROB: "And Christ, coming hierarch of the future goods, he passed through the biggest and the most consummated tabernacle, not made by hand, namely not from this building;"

<sup>237</sup> Hebrews: 5: 14: These ones don't fulfill anymore the commandments through faith, without realizing their value, but they discern the good and the bad through understanding.

<sup>238</sup> Saint Maximos the Confessor, as also Nilus the Ascetic, distinguishes in three stairs the ones who dedicate themselves to a life of awe: οἱ εἰσαγόμενοι οἱ προκόποντες καὶ οἱ τέλειοι, which correspond to the ones who purify themselves, or to the active ones, to the ones who contemplate the rationalities from nature and to the ones who see God in a mysterious way. The Jewish people were on the first stair. That's why they don't eat but the bodies of the animals, but not also their blood.

committed through the senses to the level of the knowledge with the mind.

There are also lots of other meanings of these ones, especially for you lovers of God, but we leave them now due to their multitude.

### Scholia

1. Through the seen ones of the senses he understood the moral discipline.

2. Observe that he called the rationalities as knowledge. And if the rationalities are knowledge, the one who know the rationalities he knows, of course, the Reason (Logos) and the Father of the Reason. For the Reason is the exact knowledge of His Father: "The one who sees me, he sees My Father"<sup>239</sup>, says the Savior.

3. The blood in a spiritual sense is the knowledge, as one which nourishes the body of the virtues.

### Question no. 37

*It is said into Acts about Saint Paul: "Thus that they laid on the sick ones towels and ties from on his body and the illnesses went away from them"<sup>240</sup>. Were these wonders being done for promoting his mission and the believers also rejoice of*

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<sup>239</sup> John: 14: 9: KJB: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"; ROB: "Jesus said to him: For so long I am with you and you haven't known Me, Philip? The one who has seen me he has seen the Father. How are you saying: show us the Father?"

<sup>240</sup> Acts: 19: 12: KJB: "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."; ROB: "Than also over the ones who were sick were laid towels of aprons worn by Paul, and the evil ghosts went out from them."

*them, or because his body was sanctified, these things were being committed through the power of his body? And if for this reason he wasn't harmed by the viper, for what motif the saint didn't die due to the venom of the viper, but he died from sword? This question refers also to the body of Elisha. And then, what the ties are?*

### **Answer**

Not only because of the holiness of Paul, neither only due to the faith of the ones who received the healing, the skin of his body did healings through towels and ties, but because the godlike grace, being imparted to him and to those ones, did with mercifulness into them working through faith, the holiness of the Apostle (1). And again by the will of the grace his body remained protected against sufferance, not being harmed by the venom of the viper, either for the grace changed the hurting power of the venom (2) or for it made the body of the saint able to scatter this harm, or through some other way of the oikonomia, which only God, Who did and transformed these ones, knows it. And he died by the sword also because the grace wanted. Because he wasn't immortal according to the nature, though he was wonder doer due to the grace.

If he had been immortal according to the nature, it would have been the case to ask how he could die by sword, against nature. But, once he remained mortal through nature also after achieving the holiness, is not necessary to ask why the godlike Apostle passed away from the life according to the body in this way and not in other one. For God, Who ordered before eternity the life of everyone in a useful manner, he drives each one in the way He wants, towards the end of his life, either that one is righteous, or is sinful.

Whether therefore it is one and the same the rationality of the nature and of the grace, it should wonder us and amaze us everything that happens according to the nature but against the grace, or according to the grace but against nature. But

whether other is the rationality of the nature and other is the one of the grace, it is limpid and proven thing that the Holy Fathers did wonders due to the grace, but as men they suffered due to the nature. This is because the grace didn't abolished the suffering feature of the nature, being given that the rationalities of the nature and of the grace didn't mix with each other at all (3). Thus we will understand that the grace of God does everything into the Saints according to the care which it takes of the ones who are in the care of the Providence, either they live, or they die, following through them, as through some own tools, the salvation of the other ones. These ones are appropriate also about the body of Elisha.

But because the soul of the lovers of God are more rejoiced by the spiritual meanings of the told stories, we will tell that the skin of the great Apostle was his awe, through which to some ones was "fragrance of life towards life" (4), and to others "smell of death towards death" <sup>241</sup>(5). And the towels are the limpid rationalities which were made known to him through contemplation. Finally the ties are the pious modes of the active philosophy, of the virtue. For these ties are sleeves. These rationalities and ways of work were scattered like a good fragrance from the deep awe of the blessed Apostle, like out of this skin. And the ones who were receiving them achieved healing from the illness that was tormenting them. Some of them expelled the sickness of the nescience through the rationalities of the contemplation, as through some towels, and the other ones were totally abolishing through the images of the active virtues the helplessness of the sin.

As much it concerns the harsh cold which came upon them, I believe that is the burden of the unwilling trials. And the island is the strong and unmoved habituation of hopping into God. The fire is the habit of the knowledge. Through this

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<sup>241</sup> II Corinthians: 2: 16: KJB: "To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"; ROB: "To some ones, namely, fragrance of death towards death, and to others fragrance of life towards life. And for these ones, who is competent?"

one putting Paul his hand, namely searching it through the ferreting power of the mind which contemplates, he nourished with its meanings the habit of the knowledge, which removes the sadness brought into cogitation by the storm of the trials. Finally, the viper is the evil and hurting power hidden in the nature of the sensitive things. It bites the hand, namely the ferreting work of the mind which contemplate, but doesn't wound the perspicacious mind, because this one immediately destroys in the light of its knowledge, as in a fire, the hurting power, which sticks to the active movement of the mind when the mind contemplates the sensitive things.

In the same way are understood the ones regarding Elisha. Whoever dies through his mistakes, if he is placed on the tomb of the Prophet in which is his body, namely he is brought near to the memory which bears the trace of the life of the Prophet, in which is well guarded the body of his virtues, he is brought back to life through imitating the way of life of that one, being moved to the virtuous life from the death consequent to the passions of the evilness (5).

### Scholia

1. The faith of the ones who needed the healing and were praying for it, it stirred up, he says, the power of the Ghost from the Saints, for the hidden power to be shown through faith, and the hidden faith to become power to everybody. For the true mode of the healings it is done when through the faith of the ones into whom is done, penetrated in whole power in the ones who work in Ghost.

2. The one who cleans through the leaning of his will ( $\gammaνωμη$ )<sup>242</sup> the corruptness of the sin, he breaks the corruptness of the ones who use to break by nature. For the incorruptibility of the will can sustain, with the help of the Providence,

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<sup>242</sup> This Greek word has the following translations: opinion, notion, mind, counsel, judge. (E. l. t.'s n.)

uncorrupted the corruptness of the nature, for through the grace of the Holy Ghost which is in it, doesn't allow to be dominated by the adverse qualities.

3. Once the rationality of the grace and of the nature is one and the same, it mustn't bewilder us the fact that some Saints remained sometimes above sufferings, and some other times they were brought down by them. Because we must know that the wonder was of the grace and the sufferance of the nature.

4. "Fragrance towards life" is the Apostle to the believers through his example, for through deeds he urges them to tend towards the good fragrance of the virtues, and as preacher he moves the ones who listen to the word of the grace from the life according to the senses to the life into ghost. And "smell of death towards death" he is to them who progress from the death of the nescience to the death of the disbelief, because he makes them feeling the damnation which is waiting for them. Or again, "fragrance of life towards life" he is to the ones who elevate themselves from doing to contemplation, and "smell of death towards death" to them who, after they have mortified their limbs on earth through ceasing the sin with the deed, they pass to the most-praiseworthy mortification of the thoughts and of the passionate illusions.

5. Here are explained the words: "We are the good fragrance of Christ, for God, in the ones who save themselves and in the ones who perish: to some of them fragrance of life towards life, and to some others smell of death towards death"<sup>243</sup>. "Fragrance of life towards life" he is to the ones whom his Gospel is unveiled, and "smell of death towards death" to them whom the Gospel is totally covered, because "God of this age has blinded the minds of the heathens"<sup>244</sup>. And the Gospel

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<sup>243</sup> II Corinthians: 2: 16.

<sup>244</sup> II Corinthians: 4: 4: KJB: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."; ROB: "In whom the God of this age has blinded the mind of the heathens, to not light up to them the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God".

was unveiled and covered, due to the warmth or to the cold of the ones who hear.

6. By keeping, he says, the memory of the life of the saints, through imitation, somebody rejects death brought by the passions and receives the life brought by virtues.

### **Question no. 38**

*Did the Sadducees randomly given the number of seven brothers, as husbands of a sole woman<sup>245</sup>, or this it has a deeper meaning? And if it has such a meaning, who are they and who is she?*

### **Answer**

Some people say that the persons which the Scripture doesn't praise, they mustn't be understood allegorically. But for is better to toils ourselves more and to pray ceaselessly to God to give us wisdom and power, for understanding the whole Scripture spiritually, I am going to answer also to this bewilderment, relying myself also on your prayers. The Sadducees are, according to the spiritual meaning, the devils or the thoughts, which sustain that everything is dominated by happening. And the woman is the nature of the people. The seven brothers given to her from God at different times from the beginning of the world, towards advising her and making her to bring forth fruits of the justice, are the laws<sup>246</sup>. With these ones living the nature of the people as with some husbands, she give birth to no son, but she remained barren of the fruits of the righteousness. The first law is the one given to Adam in Paradise. The second one is the law given to Adam after the banishing from Paradise, in a shape of rebuking. The third one is the one given to Noah at exiting from the ark. The fourth is

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<sup>245</sup> Matthew: 12: 20 and the followings.

<sup>246</sup> In Greek language the law is of masculine genre (νόμος νόμοι). (law laws (E. l. t.'s n.))

the law of circumcision, given to Abraham. The fifth is the ones given to the same one regarding the sacrificing of Isaac. The sixth is the one given to Moses. And the seventh is the one given through the foretelling grace, or through the instillation of the Prophets. During this whole time the human nature still didn't become company to the law of the Gospel through the connection of the faith towards the together-living, namely with the man with whom was to remain forever.

The devil bring always before our rationality, through the thoughts which they stir up, these laws, fighting against the faith with arguments which are apparently justified, taken out from Scriptures, and making us doubting that there is some resurrection from dead, and that we must wait for another way of life after the one from here. In case that we answer affirmatively, they make us asking ourselves according to which law will be nature of the men be guided, form the ones given to it from eternity? If we will say that after the one from the mentioned ones, they will object, by saying: "Therefore vain and useless will be also then the life of the people, if it wasn't liberated from the evil ones from before: namely the nature will spin around again in the same things. This introduces in a obvious manner the reign of the happening and gets the Providence out from the world". But the Lord and the savior word rejects these devils and these thoughts, making seen the incorruptibility of the nature, which it will be discovered in the future and showing that it doesn't live according to any of the mentioned laws, but, after it has been deified, it becomes company, through the Ghost, to God-the Word Himself, from Whom and towards Whom it has taken and it will take the beginning and the target of the existence.

And if somebody understands through the seven men also the seven thousands years, or the seven ages, with which the human nature cohabited, he won't interpret the place without judgment and without the necessary understanding. And to no one of these ones the nature will be wife in the future

life, for the temporal nature has received its end and the eighth man, namely the immortal and endless age, has taken her.

### Question no. 39

*What the three days are, during which the multitudes tarry nigh to the Lord into wilderness?*<sup>247</sup>

### Answer

The wilderness is the human nature or this world, in which tarry besides the rationality of the virtue and of the knowledge<sup>248</sup> the ones who endure toils and troubles full of faith and of the hope of the future goods. And the three days are, according to one of their spiritual meanings, the three powers of the soul through which by tarrying around the godlike rationality of the virtue and of the knowledge (namely studying through one, desiring through another, and through the third one fighting for it), they receive incorruptible and mind strengthening food, the knowledge of the things (1).

According to another meaning, the three days they mean the three more general laws: the written ones, the natural one and the spiritual one, or the one of the grace (2). For each law enlightens according to itself the human nature, having as Maker of its light the Sun of the righteousness. Because, as without sun in no way can there be day, likewise without the existential and self-subsistent wisdom there cannot be a law of the righteousness. This wisdom makes its own sunrise in each

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<sup>247</sup> Matthew: 15: 32: KJB: "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."; ROB: "And Jesus, calling His disciples to Him, said: I have mercy on the multitude, for behold there are three days from when they are waiting next to Me and they have nothing to eat; and I don't want to send them hungry away, to not exhaust themselves on the way."

<sup>248</sup> The rationality is in the same time the divine Logos, Who is the substance of the virtue and of the knowledge.

law and it is the one which fills up the understanding eyes of the soul with the light of the understanding. The blessed David knowing this, he says: "You Law is torch to my feet"<sup>249</sup>. Torch he called the written law, for the fact that this one, through the skillful combinations of the different symbols, riddles and material types, it spreads before the ones who widen through deeds the steps of their souls against the enemy powers, the light which burns the evilness of the passions (3). And the light unite the spiritual law of the grace due to the fact that it shows simply, without the sensitive symbols, the eternal paths<sup>250</sup>, which the contemplative mind, by following its road, it is carried towards the most high of the goods, towards God, not letting determined and limited the movement of the cogitation by any of the created things (4). For the light of the grace's law is without evening, not having any knowledge which to define its all-shining rays. Or maybe the Prophet called "legs" the road of the entire life lived according to the will of God, or the movements of the good thoughts into soul guided as by a torch of light by the written law. And "paths", he called the modes of the virtues conform with the natural law and the rationalities of the knowledge from the spiritual law, which are unveiled by the presence of God-the Word, and which bring back the nature to itself and to its cause, through virtue and knowledge<sup>251</sup>.

The ones who by the ardent desire after salvation, they stayed during these three days, or of these three laws along God-the Word, and they manly endured the toils of each one, they aren't sent away hungry, but they receive a plentiful and godlike food: for the written law, the consummated deliverance

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<sup>249</sup> Psalms: 119: 105: KJB: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."; 118: 105: ROB: "Torch to my feet is Your law and light to my paths".

<sup>250</sup> The mind eternally walks on the paths of the knowledge of God. In this sense this knowledge is a without evening light. But also in the sense that it isn't defined by anything limited.

<sup>251</sup> The natural modes of the virtues or the coming back of the nature to itself, through virtues, are not done only through the powers of the man, but through the coming to it of God-the Word. The living in conformity with the nature is conditioned by the help of the grace, a separation between nature and grace, in the Catholic sense, it isn't known by the Holy Fathers.

from the against nature passions; for the natural law, the power for fulfilling without mistake the natural duties, fulfilling through which are sustained the affectionate connections of the people to each other, being removed the whole estrangement and division which tear apart the nature; and for the spiritual one, the union with God Himself, on the ground of which, getting out from the created ones, they receive that glory from above nature, through which is shown only a sole God illuminating within them (5). But more widely about these ones you can read in the writing about "The Doubtful Places"<sup>252</sup>, where is interpreted a place from "The Speech of Saint Gregory on at the Pentecost".

### Scholia

1. He speaks about rationality, wrath and lust. Through rationality we study, through lust we want the studied good, and through wrath we fight for it.

2. He called the powers (faculties) of the soul, as ones which are capable to receive the light of the godlike commandments; and also the more general three ones, as ones which illuminate those souls which receive the light. As because at Genesis the Scripture named "day" both the light, by saying: "And God saw that the light is good and He named the light day", and also the air lightened by it, by saying: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day"<sup>253</sup>; in the same way it named "days" not only the powers of the soul, but also the laws which illuminates these ones. For only the interpenetration of those ones to each other produces the day of the virtues, through the fact that are not different anymore from the godlike light of the Word<sup>254</sup>, the powers which are totally penetrated by it.

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<sup>252</sup> Ambiguorum liber, G. P. 91, 1389-1393.

<sup>253</sup> Genesis: 1: 4: KJB: "And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."; ROB: "And God saw that the light is good, and God separated the light from the darkness."

<sup>254</sup> Του κατά τόν λόγον θείου φωτός. (By the word of divine light (E. l. t.'s n.))

3. The Word (the Rationality) of God is in the same time both torch and light. Light, for it illuminates the natural thoughts of the believers, and torch for on one hand it scatters the darkness of the life according to the senses, in the ones who hurry themselves up through fulfilling the commandments towards the hoped life, and on the other hand, punishes with the burning's judgment the ones who attach themselves willingly on this dark night of the life, for the body's love of pleasure.

4. The one who hasn't firstly elevated at himself, through the rejection of the contrary to nature passions, he won't elevate himself to the own cause, namely to God, through achieving with the help of the grace of the goods from above nature. The one who wants to be truly elevated at God, he must part himself with the cogitation from the created things.

5. The written law has at purpose the deliverance from passions, the natural one the equal honoring and the equal justification of all the people and the consummation of the spiritual one stays in the fact that its purpose is to make the man like God, as much as it is possible to the man.

#### **Question no. 40**

*What does it mean the number of the six vessels of water from the wedding from Cana Galilee?<sup>255</sup>*

#### **Answer**

God, Who made the human nature, He has given through His will together with the existence also the

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<sup>255</sup> John: 2: 6: KJB: "And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece."; ROB: "And there were six vessels of stone, placed for the cleaning of the Jews, which took two of three buckets each."

corresponding power of fulfilling the duties (1). The six vessels of water are therefore the natural power of fulfilling the godlike commandments. The people, chasing away from it the knowledge, in their vain endeavor after material things, they detached this empty and without water power and that's why they weren't knowing how to clean the dirtiness of the sin, because the one who lacks the knowledge doesn't know the way of cleaning the sins through virtue. This was happening until coming the Word (the Rationality), the Builder of the nature, He filled with that knowledge according to the nature called power of fulfilling the duties and then He transformed into wine, namely in the rationality of the knowledge from above nature, the rationality and the law of the nature (2)<sup>256</sup>. The ones who drink this water go out from the nature of the things and fly to the hidden place of the godlike inside, were they receive the joy and the gladness which are above all knowledge. They drink the good wine, namely the mysterious rationality, the godhead maker one, at the end, after they have enjoyed all the other benefactions destined by Providence to the people.

And through the number six one understands the nature's power of doing (4), not only because God made the heaven and the earth in six days, but also because it's the most perfect number inside of number ten and it is composed of its parts. The vessels of water, says the Scripture, were of two or of three measures. Through this it is shown that the nature's power of doing comprises on the plan of the natural contemplation, exactly as it would comprise two measures, the whole knowledge of the creatures, both of the bodily ones which consist in matter and shape, and of the intelligible ones, which consist in being and accident, in one word, the general knowledge of the bodily ones; and on the plan of the mysterious teaching about God, as much as it is possible to the nature, the knowledge and the light about the Holy Trinity, or about the

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<sup>256</sup> The restoration of the human nature only Christ does it. But He does more than that. He fills up the vessels with water, but then He transforms the water into wine.

Father, about the Son and about the Holy Ghost, as three measures.

Therefore, you who are on the stair of the knowledge, take heed. The general power of the nature, through which it fulfills the good ones, is divided in six. And these are the general modes of the works. And to the general power of the nature, which produces the virtues, to which it corresponds the most general virtue of all, which is also divided in six forms (species), they being also general. Corresponding to the power of the nature, the general virtue it dresses itself in more modes, ramifying itself in the six forms (5). These one must be studied by the one who initiates himself and by the one who initiates another in the mysteries of the godlike words and meanings, whether his mind delights itself with the higher meaning of these ones. Besides these, they must research who were the servants who pulled the water out, who is the bridegroom, and who is the bride, who the mother is who dared to announce the Word that "they have no wine". But lest our word about these ones to be stopped by remaining mute, not giving to the hungry ones at least a part of spiritual food, I will speak according to my power, without promising to unveil the whole meaning of the said ones (because my mind is too weak for embracing the spiritual sights comprised into them), but only as much as my capacity of understanding will be able to comprise.

So, the most general of all the virtues everybody says that is love. And the most general power of the nature which produces the love, they say that is the rationality. This one, by strongly grabbing its cause (6), and developing itself into work it differs in six more general modes, which embraces the forms (the species), in which the rationality of the love divides itself by bodily and spiritually taking care of the ones who get hungry and thirsty, of strangers and of the naked ones, of sick ones and of the ones from jails (7). Because the rationality of the virtue isn't limited only to bodies and the power of our nature isn't shown only in the ones submitted to the senses.

Therefore the most general power of the human nature gives forms to the most general virtue, by differing it through its six modes in equally numerous species. Through these ones the nature unites itself with the unitary leaning of the will<sup>257</sup>, showing into everybody (everything) the undivided and shaping rationality, which gathers them to itself through the fact that does and endures everything with kindness (8). By taking back this rationality to itself, strengthened through the due toils, the mind, cuts off all the swellings and the chippings of the nature, which contriving through the leaning of the will, the bodily self-love of everyone, has made wild the gentle nature and has cut off the one being in many and adversary parts, and, the worst of all, even corruptible to one another, in this way the mind brings back the nature to the steadily mediation, for which were even written into it by God the natural laws of the virtues (9); the Scripture indicating perhaps also this mystery, it shows the six empty and without water vessels, showing how the more general power of the nature it is in an inertia in what concerns the doing of the good.

Thus the most general power of the nature, being divided in six modes of work, it shapes in the same number the most general of the virtues, embracing the entire virtue. By doing so, the nature listens to its most general law, as to a without mistake judge of the truth. The Scripture called this judge the person who leads the ceremony of the. This one wisely declares that the best wine, which the Word has brought later through His coming, namely the higher rationality about God, the human nature must drink it at the beginning, as the first wine, and to get drunk with this one, and only after to know other wines, namely the rationalities of the things, as some wines inferior to the first one. For it is as right and as

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<sup>257</sup> ή φύσις ενοιται τω της γνώμης μοναδικω (or the nature of the opinion is unique (E. l. t.'s n.)) = the nature unites with a unitary orientation of the everybody's will and thus it regains itself the unity, which the different reckoning of the everyone's will torn it apart. But just for the fact that each individual's will unites itself with his nature, his will unites itself with the wills of everybody. For immediately that somebody puts himself in accord with the will from himself, he has put himself in accord with the nature in his fellow humans.

decent as can be that the nature to know firstly the Rationality for which it has been created and only after that to spy the rationalities of things built for itself (10).

And the ones who were pulling out the water and were serving, are the servants of the Old and of the New Testament, namely the Saint Patriarchs, the lawmakers, the leaders of the hosts, the judges, the kings, the Prophets, the Evangelists and the Apostles, through whom the water of the knowledge has been pulled out and it has been given again to the nature. This thing was done by the Word in the grace of the deification, Who made the nature out of kindness and deified it through the love for human beings. And whether somebody would say that the servants are the natural cogitations full of science and awe which at the command of the Word, they pull out the water of the knowledge from the good order of the things, I think that he doesn't mistake to the truth.

And the bridegroom is obviously, the human mind, which marries, towards good living, the virtue. The Word, being called, he joyfully comes honoring their accompanying, and strengthens the covenant of their spiritual wedding and spiritually warms, through His wine, their desire for bringing forth a lot of children. The Mother of the Word is true and undefiled faith. For as the Word as God is according to the nature the Maker of the Mother who gave Him birth according to the body, making Her Mother out of His love for people and accepting to be born by Her as man, in the same way the Word, by producing firstly in us the faith, he makes Himself later into us the Son of the faith, embodying Himself out of this faith through the virtues with the deed (11). Through faith we reach ten at everything, receiving from the Word the gifts towards salvation. Because without faith, to which the Word is God according to the nature, and according to the grace is Son, we don't have any daring to address ourselves to Him with requests.

Be it to us that to always conclude such a wedding and be it that Jesus and His Mother to come to this wedding, to

gather again our knowledge which flows outside due to the sin and to transform it in godhead. For this one gets the mind out from the knowledge of the things and strengthens to the not-changeability the knowledge of the nature, as spiritual water, through the quality of the wine.

### Scholia

1. Power he calls the movement sown into nature in existential way, towards working the virtues, but manifested through its willing and free use by the one who has it.

2. The Word of God, making Himself man, he filled up again with knowledge the nature emptied of its knowledge. And he strengthened it to non-changeability, he deified it, not through nature, but through the quality<sup>258</sup> which He has given to it, by sealing it with the His Ghost, for nothing to lack to it, as He gave strength through the quality of the wine. Cause He made Himself true man, for making also us gods according to the grace.

3. The good wine is the rationality which gets us out from nature and elevates us towards deification<sup>259</sup>; this thing was forbidden to Adam after falling<sup>260</sup>. But the Word (the Rationality), emptying Himself out of the love for people, he made Himself later, through embodiment, as only He knows, good to drink wine. For Himself is also the Providence, like

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<sup>258</sup> As the water becomes wine not through itself and not according to the substance, but through power from above and through given quality, so our nature is deified not through itself, but through a quality different from its being, which is given to it by God.

<sup>259</sup> Καλόν οινον, τόν πρός θέωσιν εκστατικόν της φυσεως λόγον (Good wine, to the eloquence of the nature (E. I. t.'s n.)). I don't believe that the Latin translation is justified: the good wine is the rationality of the nature, which elevates us towards deification. The rationality of the nature can't deifies us, like the natural power of the water didn't make it this one wine. The rationality which gets out from nature is, as it is said below, the divine Logos Himself, the supreme Rationality. But the divine Rationality lowers Himself to make possible to be received and drunken by this one as a good wine. He unites Himself with the human rationality, transforming this human rationality, like Jesus transformed the water into wine, but in wine which can be suffered by the man, and the getting out from nature doesn't mean the getting out of his one from its being, but only for its power.

<sup>260</sup> He became incapable of understanding the divine Rationality, his mind being thickened through sin.

sustainer of the things, and the Rationality of the Providence, as method of taking care of the providential ones, and the Providence Maker which sustains everything through their rationalities of being.

4. The mind's power is capable by nature of knowing the bodily and the bodiless creatures. But it receives the enlightenments of the Holy Trinity only through grace, believing that is but not daring to search what is according to the nature.

5. The general power of the nature is divided in six way and works. And the general love in six forms of virtues. Because the one who appeased the hunger, and the thirst, and helps the poor ones, the strangers , the sick and the ones from jails, either he does this bodily or spiritually, he fulfills the love towards God and towards the neighbor, which consists of six virtues, as one who keeps the sake of the soul filled up only by God.

6. The cause of the rationality is God, for Whose searching the man has received the power of the rationality.

7. Love is divided in the ones out of which it consists.

8. The one who due to the virtue he has become through the tendency of the will equal towards everybody, he shows God in himself, the One Who doesn't look at the face. Because as God created the everybody's nature, according to one and the same rationality, to he ordered that the whole movement of the will to be one and the same. Through this the rationality of the nature, which seems to be scattered, it is gathered.

9. The middle state is delivered from the passions against nature, but has not reached yet at the goods from above nature. It shows the tendency (reckoning) of the will in accord with the nature, not having and own inclination and against nature. That's why it considers all the people as one, having the law of the nature as a book written by God.

10. Natural judge isn't the nature's law, which teaches us that, before the wisdom from things, we must move our

desire towards the mysterious knowing of the Maker of everything.

11. The faith, in a more hidden meaning, it the mother of the Word; being firstly produced, it give birth later, embodied through virtues, to the Word Who begotten it (the faith).

### **Question no. 41**

*What the meaning of the five men of the Samaritan woman is and of the sixth one, who is not her husband?*<sup>261</sup>

### **Answer**

Both the Samaritan woman, and the one who was given in marriage, according to Sadducees, to the seven brothers<sup>262</sup>, and the one whit the issue of blood<sup>263</sup>, and who bowed to the ground, and the daughter of Jair and the Syrian-Phoenician<sup>264</sup> one, show both the humans` ordinary nature, and the soul<sup>265</sup> of each person in part. Each of them it means, according to the passionate disposition, both the nature and the soul. Thus the woman about whom the Sadducees speak is the nature or the soul, which cohabitated with all the godlike laws given from ever, without bringing forth fruits, and doesn't want to know about the future goods. The one sick with the issue of blood, is also both the nature and the soul, of which power, given to them for giving birth to the deeds of the righteousness and to

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<sup>261</sup> John: 4: 18: KJB: "For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."; ROB: "For you had five husbands and the one who you have now is not your husband. This one you have truly said it."

<sup>262</sup> Matthew: 22: 23-32.

<sup>263</sup> Luke: 8: 41; Matthew: 9: 20.

<sup>264</sup> Matthew: 15: 22: KJB: "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."; ROB: "And behold a woman from Canaan, from those lands, coming out she was crying, by saying: Haven mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is badly tormented by demon."

<sup>265</sup> The word soul in Greek language is of feminine genre, ψυχή.

the rationalities, flows through passions towards matter. The Syrian-Phoenician woman is again the soul and the nature of each person, of whose cogitation, like a daughter, is badly tormented by the epileptic helplessness, due to the love for matter. Jair's daughter is also the nature and the soul from under the law, which truly died due to the lack of fulfilling of the law's dispositions and of the godlike commandments. And the woman bowed down to earth is the nature or the soul which bowed towards matter the whole mind's power of activity, consequently to the deceiving from the devil. At last, the Samaritan woman, like the women from before, show the nature or the soul of each one, lacked of the prophesying gift, which spends the time, with some men, with all the laws given to the nature; from these ones five of them passed, and the sixth one, though still existing, wasn't husband of the nature or of the soul, because didn't make to be born out of him the righteousness which saves for eternity.

The first law which the nature of man had it was the one from Paradise, the second one was the one given to Adam after the banishment from Paradise, the third one is the one from the time of Noah's flood, the fourth one is the one of the circumcision in the time of Abraham, the fifth one is the one of Isaac's bringing. All of these being received by the nature, the nature rejected it, namely they died, due to not bringing forth the virtue's deeds. And the sixth law, the one given through Moses, was as wouldn't had it, either because the nature didn't commit the righteousness commanded by it, or because it followed to pass to the Gospel's law, like to another man, because the nature's law wasn't given to the people forever, but to their leading to something higher and more mysterious. This it means, I think, what the Lord said to the Samaritan woman: "And the one who you have now, isn't yours"; for He knew that the nature was to pass to Gospel. That's why He was also speaking to her around the sixth hour, when the soul is specially crossed through by the rays of the knowledge through the Word's coming to it, after the shadow of the law has passed.

And the soul stayed with the Word next to the Jacob's fountain, namely next to the Scripture's meanings. But these are enough to the present theme (1).

### Scholium

1. The Jacob's foundation is the Scripture; the water is the knowledge from the Scripture; the depth of the fountain, the difficult to be reached meaning of the mysteries of the Scripture. The bucket of water is the erudition in interpreting the godlike word of the Scripture, which the Savior didn't have it, He being the Word Himself (the Rationality itself), and not having to give to the believers a knowledge gathered through learning and study, but giving them from the spiritual grace the ceaselessly springing out wisdom, which never ends in the ones worthy of it. For the bucket, namely the erudition, pulls out a very small part of the knowledge, leaving the whole untouched, because that one cannot be comprised by any word (by any rationality). But the knowledge according to the grace comprises the whole wisdom as much as is allowed to the people, without study, gushing out in a diverse way, according to the needs.

### Question no. 42

*In what meaning it is said about us that we do the sin and do not know it, and about the Lord that He made Himself sin, but He didn't know it, and how comes that isn't worse to be sin and to not know it, than to commit the sin and to know the sin? "For he made the One Who didn't know sin, to be sin for us"*<sup>266</sup>.

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<sup>266</sup> II Corinthians: 5: 21: KJB: “

## **Answer**

Being firstly corrupted the free choosing of Adam's natural rationality, it corrupted together with it also the nature, which has lost the grace of the dispassion and that's how the sin has emerged (1). Therefore the falling of the will from good to bad is the first and the more worthy of damnation. The second one, happened because of the first one, it is the movement of the nature from incorruptibility to corruptibility, movement that cannot be condemned. Because two sins emerged in the proto-parent, by transgressing the godlike commandment: one worthy of damnation and one that cannot be condemned, having as cause the worthy of damnation one. The first one is the one of the free decision, that rejected the good willingly, and the second one, that of the nature, that has rejected unwillingly, due to the free decision, the immortality (2). This corruption and alteration of the nature, produced one out of another, wanting our Lord and God to repair it, he took the whole nature, and thus He had also, in the taken nature, the suffering characteristic, adorned with the incorruptibility of the free will (3). And thus He became through nature, due to suffering characteristic, sin, for our sake, but not knowing the sin from the leaning of the will, due to His unchangeable free will's steadiness, He repaired the suffering characteristic of the nature, making out of the end of the suffering characteristic, namely out of death, the beginning of the transformation towards that incorruptibility according to the nature (4). And as through a man, who willingly moved his free choice away from the good, has been done in all people the transformation of the nature from incorruptible to corruptible, in the same way through a man, Jesus Christ, Who didn't move the free choice from good, has been committed into all people the restoration of the nature from the state of corruptibility to the one of incorruptibility.

Therefore, the Lord not knowing my sin, namely the leaning of my free will, He didn't take and He didn't make

Himself my sin (5). But by taking that sin which was for me, namely the corruptibility of the nature due to the leaning of my free will, He made Himself, for us, suffering man by nature, abolishing my sin through the sin destined to me (6). And as in Adam the free decision of his own will for evil abolished the common adornment of the nature's incorruptibility, God reckoning that isn't good that the man, who grew evil his will, to have an immortal nature, likewise in Christ the decision of His won will towards good has washed away the common shame of the corruptibility of the entire nature. And thus at Resurrection the nature was changed into incorruptibility, for the lack of movement of His will towards evil, God judging that right is that the man, who hasn't changed his free will towards evil, to receive again the immortal nature. And this man is the embodied Word of God, Who has united to Himself, according to hypostasis, the body crossed through by the rational soul. For if that suffering, that corruptibility and that death according to the nature was brought into Adam by the leaning of the free will, rightly the steadfastness of the free will from Christ has brought that dispassion, that incorruptibility and that immortality according to the nature, through resurrection.

The changing of the life towards suffering, towards corruptibility and towards death is therefore the damnation of the sin committed through free decision by Adam. This state the man hasn't from the beginning from God, but he set it up and knew it, by committing through disobedience the sin with the will.

The damnation through death is the fruit of this sin. By taking the Lord this damnation of my sin freely chosen, namely the suffering, the corruption and death according to nature, He made Himself for me sin, through suffering, death and corruptibility, putting on Himself willingly through nature my damnation, He Who weren't condemned according to the free will. He did this for condemning the sin and my damnation from will and from nature, bringing in the same time out from nature the sin, the suffering and death. In this way it has been

made a common mystery the oikonomia of the One Who from the love of people, for me the one fallen due to disobedience, He willingly impropriated to Himself through death my damnation, for saving me, destining to me through this deed the renewal towards immortality.

I reckon that it has been shown, on short, from many sides, how the Lord made Himself sin, but He didn't know the sin, and how the man didn't become sin, but he did and knew the sin, both for the one from the free will, of which doer he is, and on the one of the nature, which the Lord received it for him, the first one being made totally free (7). Therefore in no way is a better thing to do and to know the sin, than to make oneself sin. This was seen by taking in account the purpose of the Scripture, which we have shown, and of the due understanding of the meanings, which are in the word sin. For the first sin produces the separation from God (8), rejecting by free decision the godlike ones; and the second one melts lot of evilness, not allowing that the evilness of the free decision to step to the deed, being given the weakness of the nature (9).

### Scholia

1. Read, Nilus, and memorize it, even later.
2. The nature's sin, he says that is death, through which we cease to exist, even if we don't want it; and the sin of the will is choosing the contrary to the nature ones, through which we willingly refuse to be happy<sup>267</sup>.
3. The Lord, by embodying Himself as man, He was corruptible according to the nature. In this sense it is said that He became sin.

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<sup>267</sup> Saint Maximos often places in parallel the existence (*τό είναι* (it is (E. l. t.'s n.))) with the happy existence (*τό εὖ είναι* (it is good (E. l. t.'s n.))). The first one we have it from God; for the second one we must collaborate also us through our free will. The first one we have it exclusively from God in quality of initial cause; the second one through God as final target towards which we have to tend.

4. The death of the Lord, he says, has become beginning of the whole incorruptibility of the entire nature.

5. And as man He was sinless according to nature.

6. The sin to us is the corruptibility of the nature; the sin is the slippery character of the free will. The man has become mortal, suffering death, on the ground of a right damnation, to be abolished the free will's death.

7. The first sin, he says that is the one of the Adam's free will, leaned towards evil. That's why he was the only one "free among dead ones"<sup>268</sup>, not having the sin due to which death emerged. To do and to know the sin is proven that it depends on the will's decision.

8. Adam became suffering by nature, towards the punishment of the free will's sin. The Lord by not knowing this sin, He made Himself sin, by taking as man, due to it, through nature, the suffering characteristic according to the body.

### **Question no. 43**

*If the Scripture says that the tree of life is the wisdom, and the work of the wisdom consists in discerning and in knowing<sup>269</sup>, through what is different the tree of knowing the good and the bad from the tree of life?*

### **Answer**

The great teachers of the Church, being able to say many things about this theme, through the grace from

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<sup>268</sup> Psalms: 8: 6: KJB: "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."; ROB: "You put him over the work of Your hands, all things You put under his feet."

<sup>269</sup> Proverbs: 3: 8: KJB: "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her."; "Tree of life it is to the ones who master it, and the ones who lean against it they are happy."

themselves, they reckoned that is better to honor this place with the silence, not wanting to say anything deeper, due to the helplessness of the many to elevate themselves to the understanding of the written ones. And if some on them even said something, in the first place they studied the power of the listeners and in this way they told a part of what they could say, for the profit of the ones whom they were teaching, letting the most part untouched. That's why I also would have thought that it better to keep silence over this place, if I wouldn't have reckoned that by doing so I would have saddened your loving of God soul. That's why, for your sake, I will tell what can be appropriate to everybody and what can be understood both by the small ones and the great ones.

The tree of life and the other tree are much and unspeakable different, by the fact itself that it is called the tree of life, and the other one not of the life, but of "knowing the good and the bad". For the tree of life is of course life-doer and the tree which is not of the life, it is proven to be death-doer. Because the tree which is not life-doer, for it wasn't called tree of life, of course it will be death-doer, since nothing else is different by opposition, from life.

Besides this, the tree of life is much different also like wisdom from the tree of knowing the good and the bad, which isn't even wisdom. For characteristic to the wisdom are the mind and the rationality, and characteristic to the opposite habituation of the wisdom are the lack of rationality and the feeling (the domination of the senses). So, because the man came to existence composed from mental soul and body endowed with feeling (senses), according to the first meaning, the tree of life is the mind of the soul, within which the wisdom it has its chair, and the tree of the knowledge the good and of the bad is the feeling of the body, within which is proven to be the irrational movement. The man by receiving the godlike commandment of not touching through experience, with the deed, this feeling, he respected it not. Both trees, namely both the mind and the feeling, they have, according to the Scripture,

the power of discerning between the spiritual (intelligible) ones and the ones submitted to the senses (the sensitive ones), between the temporary ones and the eternal ones. Better said, as being the soul's power of discernment, it convinces the soul to grab zealously the first ones, and to despise the other ones. And the feeling has the power to discern between the pleasure and the pain of the body. Better said, being this one a power of the animated and sensitive bodies, it convinces the man so to embrace the first one (namely the pleasure) and to reject the second one (the pain). Therefore when the man isn't preoccupied to make other difference but this one, between the bodily feeling of pleasure and pain, he transgresses the godlike commandment and eats from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. He has namely the irrationality of the feeling as sole means of discernment in the service of preserving the body. And through it he totally grabs himself on the pleasure like on what is good and avoids the pain like what is bad. But when, though, he is preoccupied to do with the mind only the difference between the temporary and the eternal ones, he keeps the divine commandment, by eating from the tree of life. He namely has then the wisdom which dwells in the mind, as sole means of discernment in the service of sustaining the soul. And through it he endeavors himself after the glory of the eternal ones, like after the true good and retains himself from the corruptibility of the temporary ones, like from what is bad.

Great it is, consequently, the difference between the two trees and between their natural power of discernment, as also between the own meanings of everyone. Because the terms of good and bad are used, without difference, in many meanings and they can cause to the ones who don't cogitate wisely upon the words of the Ghost, many straying. But you, being wise by grace, you know that what it is simply called bad, isn't bad in all ways, but it is bad in report with something, and in report with something else it isn't bad. In the same way what is simply called good, isn't good in all ways, but it is in report with something, and in report with something else isn't good (1).

Guard yourself therefore against the danger which emerges from using the same names for different things.

### Scholia

The good of the mind is the dispassionate love for the ghost and the bad is the passionate affection. The good of the feeling is the passionate movement through pleasure towards the body, and its bad it is the disposition which is born in it through virtue.

### Question no. 44

*Towards whom says God “Behold Adam has become like one of us?” If He says towards the Son, how Adam is placed next to God, not being from His being. And if He says towards angels, how He places the angel next to Himself as equal according to the being, by saying “like one of us”?*

### Answer

I have already told in the chapter about the raising of the tower, that the Scripture imagines God speaking, according to the inward disposition from the soul of the ones under providence. It indicates thus the godlike will through its own images fitted to us according to the nature. Neither here therefore the Scripture doesn't present God to us without a certain cause, by saying: “Behold Adam has become like one of us”, but it presents Him saying this after presenting the commandment. And it adds also the cause of this saying, which you have forgotten to put in into the question and which clarifies the whole meaning. Because by saying: “knowing the good and the bad. And now lest to stretch his hand and to take from the tree of life and to eat and to live forever”. Suddenly, namely, with the advice given to him, the devil elevated the man

and the polytheism, by saying him: "In the day in which you will eat from the tree, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like some gods, knowing the good and the bad". That's why God uses ironically and accusatory the plural: "He has become like one of us", which corresponds to the idea about God, seeded in Adam by the deceitfulness of the snake, to rebuke the man who listened to the devil. And lest somebody t imagine that the ironical manner of speaking is stranger to the Scripture`s custom, let him listen to how the Scripture speaks in the name of God towards Israel: "If you will walk against me with cunningness, I will also walk against you with cunningness"<sup>270</sup>. But the cunningness doesn't differ at all from irony. And that one remember also how God prepared the deceitfulness to Ahab, showing to his the lie like truth (2), for by mistaking that one to be God bringing upon him the just punishment<sup>271</sup>. The Scriptures aims, therefore, to deceive Adam, when it presents God saying about him, that "he has becomes like one of us". Because otherwise how God would add: "knowing the good and the bad", as he would have also a composed knowledge and consisting of opposed things? This one is impossible to be thought about God, and even less to dare to say it about the One Who is sole simple according to the being, to the power and to the knowledge and Who doesn't have but the knowledge of the good (3); better said, he is the power and the knowledge themselves. But not even one from the rational beings, who have their existence from and after God, doesn't have once and in the same place, in the simple movement of the cogitation, the composed knowledge of the contrary ones, because the knowledge of the one of the two things which are contrary to each other it produces the ignoring of the other thing. Because it can't be mixed the knowledge of two contrary things and it

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<sup>270</sup> Leviticus: 26: 27-28: KJB: "And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; // Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins."; ROB: "If neither after this you will listen to Me and you will step against Me, then I also will come with anger upon you and I will punish you sevenfold for your sins;"

<sup>271</sup> III Kings: 22 and the followings.

don't coexist at all. The knowledge of this thing it means the incognizance of the other one from the contrary ones, as the eye cannot perceive in the same time what is above and what is below and what is on both sides, but it is necessary a own turning towards each of them, by detaching from the others.

The Scripture presents God, therefore, like He would inappropriate the Adam's suffering itself, or rebukes Adam for listening to the advice of the snake, determining him to realize the polytheistic insanity, sown within him through the deceitfulness of the satan. If it is so, the bewilderment has been clarified enough. Besides, if you alone find out something higher, please share to me from the gift destined to you by God for the knowledge of the things. And the word: "And now lest to stretch his hand and to take from the tree of the life and to live forever", I reckon that providentially aims to separate with the deed the unmixed things for the evil to not become immortal, and being preserved through the impartation of the good. This is because the One Who has made the man wants that the knowledge of the same man to not be mixed; but to be staying in the same time in connection with the ones that are contrary (5).

### Scholia

1. God speaks to Adam according to the idea of godhead, which that one learnt it from the devil.

2. The one who loves the lie, he is given to it towards perdition, to know through suffering what he willingly has cultivated and to find out from experience that he has embraced by mistake, death instead of life.

3. God has only the knowledge of the good, being the science and the knowledge of the good itself. And He has not the knowledge of the bad, for He hasn't either its power. For, only if somebody has by its nature power for something, he has also its knowledge in existential manner. So the evil is cogitated in rational beings as something which comes later in an

accidental mode, against nature, due to their passivity, but no on the basis of a natural power.

4. The knowledge of the contrary ones is contemplated by turn by the ones who are capable of it.

5. The one who has convinced his conscience to consider the evil that he does it as it would be good by nature, that one has restricted the soul's power of activity as it would be a hand and he has taken in a guilty manner from the tree of life, reckoning the evil as immortal by nature. That's why God, placing through nature in the conscience of the man the rebuking for the evil, He has separated him from life, as on one who has become evil through the decision of the will. And this is for lest, by committing the evil, to be able to convince his conscience that the evil is good by nature.

### **Question no. 45**

*What is intended to be said in Leviticus by mentioning the swinging chest and the separated arm (hip), consecrated, in the honor of God, to the priests?<sup>272</sup>*

### **Answer**

I believe that through the chest it is understood the higher contemplation, and through the arm, the activity, namely the habit (the aptitude) of cogitation and the work, or the knowledge and the virtue (1). This is for the knowledge brings the mind in an unmediated manner to God, and the virtue detaches it through deeds from the whole becoming of

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<sup>272</sup> Leviticus: 7: 31-32: KJB: "And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. // And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings."; ROB: "The grease to be burnt by the priest of the altar, and the chest will be of Aaron and of his sons. // And the right shoulder from the deliverance sacrifices which you bring give it to the priest."

the things. These ones have been left by the Scripture on the account of the priests, who have received as inheritance only God and nothing from the ones of the earth.

Or an another meaning: The ones who through knowledge and virtue are penetrated by the Ghost, they have to do through the word of the teaching, the others` hearts capable of awe and of faith, and their doing aptitude and power, they must separate them from the endeavors according to the corruptible nature and to move them towards achieving the incorruptible and above nature goods. That`s why rightly the Scripture has commanded that, from the ones brought as sacrifice to God, the swinging chest, namely the heart of the ones who dedicate themselves to God, and the arm, namely their activity, to be given on the account of the priests (2).

### Scholia

1. The chest is the symbol of the contemplation, and the arm of the activity. This is because the contemplation is the attitude of the cogitation, and the activity is work. By both these is characterized the true priesthood.

2. The one who through pious teaching, brings to God as sacrifice the hearts of the others, like the chest from Leviticus, and the one who separates their power of activity from the corruptible one by fulfilling the commandments, he has become priest, taking on his account the chest and the arm of the ones who bring on themselves as sacrifice to God.

### Question no. 46

*What the difference between mirror and riddle is?*<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> I Corinthians: 13: 12: KJB: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."; ROB: "For now we see like through a mirror, in riddle, and then, face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I was known to."

## **Answer**

The mirror is, to say it shortly, the conscience which has in it intact the form of all the virtues with the deed and through the clean with the understanding sees God; or in other words, it is the habituation with the fulfillment of the commandments, which comprises the synthesis of all the virtues fulfilled together in a unitary manner, like a divine face. And the riddle is the knowledge of the godlike rationalities (words), through a full embracement, as much as it is possible, with the help of the contemplation, comprising in itself the transparent showing of the one from above understanding. The mirror is, simply speaking, the habituation which indicates the original form of the virtues, which will be unveiled to the worthy ones. This is because the mirror shows the future end of the philosophy with the deed, to the ones who have the mirror. And the riddle indicates the original of the intelligible ones, through knowledge (1).

So the whole righteousness from here, compared to the future one, it has the meaning of a mirror, which reflects the image of the original things, but doesn't comprise the things themselves in their unveiled subsistence. And the whole knowledge that we have here about the high things, compared to the future one, it is a riddle which contains an indication of the truth, but not the truth itself in its subsistence, which it will be unveiled in the future. Because into virtue and into knowledge are comprised the godlike ones, the mirror indicates to us the originals through virtue, and the riddle makes transparent the original through knowledge. This is the difference between mirror and riddle: the mirror announces the future end of the creature, and the riddle indicates the mystery of the contemplation<sup>274</sup>.

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<sup>274</sup> Our virtue from here, no matter how consummated, it is only a mirror through which one can see the future consummation, which on the other hand it won't be so-called virtue, if the virtue is a mirror, or a transparent veil, which will cease once. And our knowledge from here, as higher stage of the virtue, no matter how rich would be, it isn't but a riddle through which

## Scholium

The mirror indicated the goods which will correspond to the creature and the riddle indicates the future mysteries of the knowledge.

### Question no. 47

*What does it mean: “The voice of the one who shouts in the wilderness” and the other ones? What the wilderness is and what does it mean here the way of the Lord and its preparation? Which are the His paths and what does it mean to straighten them? What the precipitous valleys are and what does it mean “and the whole precipitous valley will be filled up”? What the mountains and the hills are, and what their downing means? What do mean the crooked ones and how one will straighten them? What the harsh ones are and how will they be made smooth ways? And what does it mean after he says all these: “And each body will see the salvation from God”?*<sup>275</sup>

### Answer

Voice of God the Word, which shouts from the beginning into wilderness, namely into the human nature, or in

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the future can be foreseen, which at its appearance it will abolish any riddle, or the knowledge from here.

So the virtue and the knowledge have a paradoxical constitution. On one hand they comprise the future reality, and on the other hand they dissimulate it, they hide it, they deceive us regarding its true image (κατ ειδος) (depending on the type (E. l. t.'s n.)). It would be interesting to compare the idea of dissimulation involved in the Christian virtue and knowledge to the one from the Blaga's (Lucian Blaga, Romanian poet and philosopher (E. l. t.'s n.)) gnosiology for instance. It could be possible to say about the stylistic categories of this one, or about the Kantian ones, which on one hand present something from reality, and on the other hand they dissimulate it, that they are the expression of our finite powers of understanding the reality. When these powers will cease and their place it will be taken by the infinite godlike power, then we will know the Truth "face to face".

<sup>275</sup> Isaiah: 40: 3-5; Luke: 3: 4-6.

this world, is of course any saint, either he consecrates to God, sincerely, like Abel<sup>276</sup>, the first movement of the soul's contemplation, fattened through virtues (1); or he walks with the unmoved hope of the faith, like Enos<sup>277</sup>, of the future goods, achieving through the hope in them the power of calling them with strength (2); either that, tried in all virtue, he has raised his mind, like Enoch<sup>278</sup>, totally from the connection and the knowledge of the things and he has moved it, fully liberated, to that cause itself from above understanding (3); or, like Noah<sup>279</sup>, looking through the faith at the future images of the godlike judgment, he has composed, like on a ship, a life and a habituation, which to save him from the future anger, strengthened from all quarters with the fear of God (4); or that, like Abraham, seeing with the clean eye of the faith the beauty of the future goods, he has listened to go out willingly from the land, the kinship and the affection towards the body, towards the senses and towards the ones submitted to the senses (5) and, being during the trials and the fights, above nature, he preferred instead of the nature that One Who is the cause of the nature, like the great Abraham preferred God to Isaac<sup>280</sup>; either that, like Isaac<sup>281</sup>, he has reached at the top of the suffering

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<sup>276</sup> Genesis: 4: 4: KJB: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering."; ROB: "And Abel brought from the firstborn ones of his sheep and from their fat. And the Lord looked at Abel and at his gifts."

<sup>277</sup> Genesis: 4: 26: ROB: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."; ROB: "To Seth also was born a son, and he called him Enos. Then the people started to call the name of the Lord God."

<sup>278</sup> Genesis: 5: 24: KJB: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."; ROB: "And Enoch walked before God and then he was not found anymore, for God moved him (from this world)."

<sup>279</sup> Genesis: 6: 8: KJB: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."; ROB: "But Noah found grace before the Lord God."

<sup>280</sup> Genesis: 21: 1; 22: 2.

<sup>281</sup> Genesis: 26: 1: KJB: "AND there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar."; ROB: "And there was a famine into country, besides the first famine, which happened in the days of Abraham. Then Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech, the king of the Philistines."

and at a insatiable hunger of contemplation, he has gained such a firm habituation into virtue and knowledge, then it was impossible to move him from truth, even when he has been fought by the cunning ghosts (6); either that, like Jacob, by cleaning his mind of the thicket of the material ones and of their confusion, he has made it smooth and, by dressing his body in baby goatskins, namely the harshness of the life of God, he has received from God the power against the bodily thought; then, also like Jacob, due to the fear of the passions` uprising, and due to the sake of a higher teaching through experience, he has moved himself in Haran, namely to the contemplation of the nature from which by taking, through the toils with the deed, the whole spiritual science of the seen world, gathered in different cogitations and meanings, he has turned himself back in the parental and own land, namely to the knowledge of the intelligible ones, bringing with him, like some women and handmaids, the firm habits and things of the activity and of the contemplation, which he has achieved and the sons born out of them, who are these ones (7)<sup>282</sup>. And simply speaking, not to take the talk any longer over what is needed, showing the life of each one, every saint is, obviously, through his life, as one who has in himself that word Who shouts His will towards the other people, a voice of the Word and a forerunner, on the measure and in the image of the righteousness and of the faith from within him.

More than all of them though, is the voice of God and forerunner the great John, the herald and the preacher of the true coming of God, of that one without images and symbols, as also the one who shows Him, to the one who don`t know Him. For he showed openly the One Who removes the world`s sin<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Genesis: 33: 5: "AND Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids."; ROB: "Then, raising up his eyes, Jacob saw Esau, his brother, coming with the four hundred people. And James divided the children of Leah and of Rachel and of the two handmaids."

<sup>283</sup> John: 1: 26: KJB: "John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not"; ROB: "John answered them, saying: I baptize with

and contributed, with his ministration from the Baptism, to the fulfilling of the salvation's mysteries, according to the oikonomia.

But because, due to the richness of the grace, any syllable, even the most insignificant one of the godlike Scripture, it can be interpreted in many ways to the profit of the ones eager of virtue and of knowledge, let's study, as much as it is possible to us, also in another manner the words placed at the beginning on the chapter.

Therefore, the wilderness, as we have said, it is the nature of the people and this world, as also each soul in part, due to the lack of bringing forth the good fruits, where it has reached due to the ancestral mistake.

The voice of the Word Who shouts is the movement of the conscience at every mistake. This one, by shouting in the hidden of the heart, it prepares the way of the Lord. Preparing the way of the Lord is limpid and proven that it is done through changing and correcting towards good of the ways (of life) and of the thoughts and through cleaning the defilements from before. And beautiful and glorious way is the virtuous life of everyone, along which the Word makes the road of the salvation, dwelling into him through faith and walking accompanied by the diverse precepts and dogmas of the virtue and of the knowledge. The paths of the Word are the diverse modes of the virtues and the different behaviors and occupations according to the will of God. These ones are made right by the ones who don't cultivate the virtue and the study of the godlike words either for glory, or from avarice, either to be flattered by people, or to be pleasant to the people, or to boast themselves before the people, but they do and say and cogitate everything before God. For the Word of God doesn't tarry on the path which aren't straight, even if He would have found the way prepared in certain regards. For instance, somebody is fasting and he abstains from the food which stirs up the

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water; but amid you is the One Whom you do not know;”

passions and he does all the other things which can help to the deliverance of passions. This one has prepared the certain way, but he cultivates these modes for the vain glory, or for the avarice, or to be flattered by people, or to be pleasant to them, or for other reason, and not for being pleasant to God. This one hasn't made straight the ways of God. He suffered the toil of preparing the way, but he doesn't have God walking on his paths. So, the way of the Lord is the virtue, and the straight path is the right and not-cunning mode (the manner) of the virtue.

"Every precipitous valley will be filled up". It is about, of course, about the valley of the ones who have well prepared the way of the Lord and have straightened His paths, and not pure and simple about the everybody's valleys; namely not about the ones who haven't prepared the way of the Lord and haven't straightened His paths. And the precipitous valley is the body of each one, when it has been dug and eroded by the much flowing of the passions and when has been cut the spiritual continuity and cohesion with the soul, sustained by the law of God, which ties them together. But it can be the understood as a precipitous valley also the soul, which has been dug and eroded by the long storms of the sin and which has lost to the vice the beauty of the smoothness in ghost (8). So every precipitous valley, namely the body and the soul of the ones who prepared the way of the Lord and have made His paths straight, it will be filled up by rejecting the passions, which produce within them, in body and into soul, precipitous inequalities, and it will be regain the natural countenance of the virtuous living, smoothed into ghost.

"And each mountain and hill will be lowered". As it is known, next to the valley usually there are the mountains and the hills. Mountain is any "height which rises up against the knowledge of God"<sup>284</sup> and hill is every sin which rebels against

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<sup>284</sup> II Corinthians: 10: 5: KJB: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the

the virtue. In other words, the mountains are the ghosts which produce the nescience, and the hills, the ones who commit the sin. When every valley, namely the body or the soul of the ones who have prepared the way of the Lord and have made straight His paths, will be filled up with knowledge and virtue, by the presence of God the Word Who walks among them through the commandments, all the ghosts of the liar knowledge and of the sin will be humiliated. For also the Word of God will trample and will submit and break down their cunning mastery, arisen against the human nature, by digging, to say so, the size and the height of the mountains and of the hills and will fill up the valleys with them (9). For truly if somebody will take back, through the power of the Word, everything that the devils have taken from the nature, producing the nescience and the sin in the content of the nature, there won't be any height of the nescience and of the sin at all, as also there won't exist anymore in the seen world any mountain and any hill, if the people would have a machine with which to dig the mountains and the hills and to fill up the valleys.

So the lowering of the mountains and of the spiritual and cunning hills it means the restoration of the body and of the natural powers of the soul in their order. After this restoration the loving of God mind, being filled up, in a natural way, of the richness of the virtue and of the knowledge, it will smoothly pass through this age and it will vigorously step on the not-aged and incorruptible world of the spiritual and holy Powers. It won't be deceived anymore by the willing passions of the body, which use the diverse and the cunning pleasure, and won't be exasperated anymore by the unwilling trials of the pain, for renouncing to the difficult way of the commandments, running away from the harshness of the virtue's toils.

"The crooked ones become straight" when the mind, liberating the body's limbs of passion, namely stopping the senses and the other limbs from working the pleasure, teaches

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obedience of Christ;"; ROB: "And all the haughtiness which raises itself up against the knowledge of God and every though we enslave it, towards the obedience to Christ."

them to move themselves according to the simple rationality of the nature (10). And the “harsh ones”, namely the unwilling trials, they will become smooth ways, when the mind, rejoicing itself and being glad, suffers with a good heart the helplessness, the troubles and the needs, abolishing the whole mastery of the willing passions through the unwilling toils (11). For the one who desires himself after the true life, knowing that the whole toil, either the willing one, or the unwilling one, he makes himself death to the pleasure, which is the mother of death (12), he will receive with gladness all the harshness of the unwilling trials, rejoicing himself into patience and making out of his troubles easy and smooth ways, which lead him without straying him, towards the crown of the calling from above, the one who with awe makes longwise them his godlike road.

Consequently everyone who has quenched through restraint the tortuous, complicated and mixed pleasure, in diverse manner in all the senses, he has straighten the crooked ones. And everyone who tramples with the power of the patience over the harsh and difficult to cross happenings of the toils, he has made harsh those smooth ways. That's why “he will see the salvation from God”, which he will receive as a reward of the virtues and of the toils for it, as one who has fought well and according to the law, has defeated the pleasure through the thirst for virtue and has trampled the pain through love of knowledge and through both of them he has manly worn the godlike toils (13).

That's why he says: “And all the body will see the salvation from God”. Through “all the body” one understands the faithful body, according to the word: “And I will pour out from My Ghost over all the body”<sup>285</sup>, namely over all the body who has believed. So, not all the body, in general, will see the

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<sup>285</sup> Joel: 2: 28: KJB: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:”; Joel: 3: 1: ROB: “After that, I will pour out My ghost over all body, and your sons and your daughters will be prophets, your elders will dreams dream and your young people visions will see.”

salvation from God. Because the body of the unbelievers it won't not see it, if it is true the word which says: "Let the unbeliever perish, to not see the glory of the Lord"<sup>286</sup>. It is here, in a determined manner, about all the unbeliever body. And through body as part, the Scripture's word means usually the entire man. It shouts therefore: "And all the man will see the salvation from God". So all the human being which listens to the voice which shouts into wilderness and, according to the meaning shown above, prepares the way of the Lord and straightens His paths; all the man who then, by tearing down the mountains and the spiritual and cunning mountains and the hills, and fills up the valley, namely the soul which, through its carving, namely by transgressing the godlike commandment, has occasioned to the mentioned cunning mountains and hills to raise up (14); all the man who through this filling up causes the downing of the cunning power and then he straightens, through restraint, the crooked ways of the willing passions, namely the pleasure's movements and smoothes through patience the harsh happenings of the unwilling trials, namely the diverse sorts of pains, making them good ways: all the man of this kind rightly will see the salvation from God, as one who has become clean in heart. For the clean in heart one sees God, through his virtues and pious contemplations, at the end of his struggles, according to the word: "Blessed the pure in heart, for they will see God"<sup>287</sup>. For he has received as payment for the toils for virtue, the grace of the dispassion, which shows God fully, unlike anything else, to the ones who have Him. And maybe to the ones who seek the higher meanings it is given to hear also otherwise, on the ground of this grace, in their soul liberated from passions, as in a wilderness, the voice of the

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<sup>286</sup> Isaiah: 26: 10: KJB: "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."; ROB: "If we have mercy on the lawless one, he doesn't learn anymore what the justice is and in the land of the saint ones there the crookedness will be done. Let the lawless ones not be on earth anymore, and let them not see anymore the glory of the Most High."

<sup>287</sup> Matthew: 5: 8: KJB: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."; ROB: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for those ones will see God."

godlike wisdom and knowledge, which shouts out without sound, through virtues (15). For one and the same Word makes Himself everything to everybody according to each one, crossing through each one and giving anticipatively His grace, as a forerunner-voice, which prepares everybody for His coming. In some people this grace becomes repentance, as forerunner of the future righteousness, in other virtue, as preparing of the waited for knowledge, and again in others knowledge, as icon of the future contemplative aptitude. Simply speaking, the time is getting away from the contemplative mind, when this one achieves through knowledge (in a gnostic manner) the godlike ascents of the Word and accommodates to His supernatural and loving of people rationalities, through which He makes Himself everything to everybody, to save them all through the richness of His mercifulness.

### Scholia

1. The one who cultivates the knowledge fattened through virtues, namely the working knowledge, he has become like Abel. Therefore look towards God and towards His gifts.
2. The one who truly knows the future ones and has trust in them, he never ceases to call through deeds the hoped ones. And thus he becomes a new Enoch, who calls on God.
3. The one who is well pleasant to God through deeds, he moves his mind through contemplation in the land of the spiritual ones, to not see anymore, through the illusion of something, death which comes through the passions sustained by feeling. This one is no more under anything from those which want to enslave him.
4. The one who due to the future anger, strives himself in a tiring life, he has become like Noah, who through a little distress of the body escapes the future damnation of the unbelievers.

5. Earth he calls the body, kinship: the senses, parental house: the world submitted to the senses. The Patriarch got out from these ones; he cut the affection of the soul for them.

6. Only about Isaac was written that he didn't move himself from the Promised Land<sup>288</sup>. His father, Abraham, went out from Mesopotamia and went to Egypt, and his son Jacob was banished from Mesopotamia and after that he settled down in Egypt, where he also died.

7. Through wives he understood the habits of the virtue and of the knowledge, and through housemaids their works, Out of these ones are born, as some sons, the rationalities comprised in nature and in time.

8. Like the body ceaselessly hit by passions becomes like a precipitous valley, so becomes the soul when is carved by the flowing of the evil thoughts.

9. The rejection of the contrary to the nature passions and the achieving of the according to nature virtues fill up the dugout soul like a valley and humbles the cogitation exalted like a mountain, by the evil ghosts.

11. The "crooked ones" are the happenings of the unwilling trials. They are transformed in smooth ways through the patience with thanksgiving.

12. The mother of death is the pleasure, and the death of the pleasure is the tiredness, either the one out of the free will, or the unwilling one.

13. The one who loves the virtue, he quenches the wanted oven of the pleasure. And the one of whose mind is crossed through by the knowledge of the truth he is not stopped by the unwilling toils from the ceaseless movement of the desire which carries him towards God.

14. The soul carved through sin, has given to the devils as to some mountains the possibility of exaltation, namely to master upon himself.

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<sup>288</sup> The more accurate translation from Romanian language to English language would be "the Land of Promise" (E. l. t.'s n.).

15. The virtue worded with the deed becomes voice of the conscience which shouts out, like in the wilderness, in the lacked of passions soul. This is because the virtue is the forerunner of the true wisdom, announcing the truth which will be shown after it according to oikonomia, but exists before it according to the cause<sup>289</sup>.

### Question no. 48

*The second part of the Chronicles says about Hosea: “he did what is righteous before God and sought the Lord in the days of Zachariah, who advises him in the fear of the Lord; and the Lord gave him prosperity”<sup>290</sup>. “And Hosea built towers in Jerusalem and at the gate of the angle and over the angle of the valley and over the angles; and he enforced them. And he built tower in the wilderness and dug many water fountains, for he had many flocks in the field and worker to the vines from the mountains and from Carmel, for he was a land worker”<sup>291</sup>. What the towers are, what is the gate of the angle, what the valley is and its angle and again what the angles are, and the towers*

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<sup>289</sup> The truth is the cause of the virtue, but it is useful to the man to reach at the truth through virtue.

<sup>290</sup> II Chronicles: 26: 4-5: KJB: “And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did. // And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.”; ROB: “This one did things which were pleasant before the eyes of the Lord, just as Amaziah, his father, did. // For he ran to God in the days of Zachariah, who teaches him the fear of God. And while he ran to the Lord also God helped him and it went well to him.”

<sup>291</sup> Ibid: 9-10: KJB: “Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. // Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.”; ROB: “Then Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem, above the gates from the corner and above the gates from the valley, as also at the corner of the wall and fortified it. // He also built towers into wilderness and he dug many water fountains, for he had many cattle on the field and of the valley; he had land workers and vinedressers into the mountain and on Carmel, for he loved working the field.”

*from wilderness? What the dug fountains and the flocks are? What Sephila and the plane are? Who the workers from the vineyard are and what the Mountain and the Carmel are? And what does it mean: "For he was a land worker?"*

### **Answer**

Come, most glorified Word of God, and impart us, on the measure of our powers, the unveiling of Your words. By removing the thickness of the coverings, show us, Christ, the beauty of the spiritual meanings. Take our right hand, namely the power of our mind, and "guide us Your commandments on the way"<sup>292</sup>. And bring us to the place of Your wonderful tent, to the inside of the house of God (1), in voice of joy and of confessing of the sound of the holyday"<sup>293</sup>, for also us, by confessing the witness through the joy of the contemplation<sup>294</sup>, to be made worthy of coming to the unspoken place of Your feast and to feast together with the ones who spiritually celebrate there, **singing the knowledge of the unspoken ones with the silent voices of the mind**. And forgive me, Christ, for daring, at the command of Your worthy servants, what is over my power. Lighten my not-lightened cogitation, towards the understanding of the present place, to be You even more glorified, as One Who gives "sight to the blind ones and makes the tongue of the stutterers to speak clearly.

I reckon, therefore, that as, to a certain place, Solomon was the image of Christ God, so was also Uzziah to a certain place the image of the Savior. For the name Uzziah, interpreted

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<sup>292</sup> Psalms: 119: 35: KJB: "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight."; ROB: "Advice me on the way of Your commandments, for this is what I have wanted."

<sup>293</sup> Psalms: 42: 4: KJB: "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God."; ROB: "I will praise You in theorbo, God, my God."

<sup>294</sup> Through the two stairs of the ascension.

in Greek language, it means the strength of God. And the natural strength and the hypostatical power of God and the Father, is our Lord Jesus Christ. This One has made Himself the cornerstone. And the angle is the Church. For as the angle makes through itself the connection between the two walls, likewise the Church of God is made through the union of two peoples, of the one from the Gentiles and of the one from the Jew3s. And this union has Christ like connection (2). This One built the “walls in Jerusalem”, namely he elevated, as some fortifications, “in the place from where is seen the peace” the first godlike and unbreakable words (rationalities) of the dogmas about godhead. And “at the gate of the angle” he elevated the words (rationalities) of the dogmas about embodiment. For gate and door of the Church is also Him (3), for He says: “I am the door”. This gate is surrounded by towers, namely by the fortifications of the godlike dogmas about embodiment, showing that the ones who want to rightly believe they must enter inside the angle, namely in the Church, through these fortifications and to be defended by them. For the one who is assured by the towers of the godlike dogmas, as by some fortifications of the truth, he doesn't fear the thoughts and the devils which menace him with the perdition.

“And over the angle of the valley”. The valley is the body. And its angle is its union with the soul<sup>295</sup>, through the connection into ghost (4). Over this union are the towers built, namely the fortifications of the commandments and the teachings which the right reckoning draws out of them, for through these ones to be guarded undetached the union of the body with the soul, as an angle.

“And he built towers over the angles”. Angles may the Scripture called the different union between the separated creatures, which were done through Christ (5). For He has united the man by secretly removing into the ghost, the

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<sup>295</sup> The image of the angle for the unity which is done between two things, which still aren't confounded, is as appropriate as one could find. The angle is a whole, in which though the united parts can be distinguished. The straight line wouldn't express this novelty, but it would show a merger of the united ones.

difference between man and woman, for He liberated in both of them from the rationality of the nature from the characteristics grown out from the passions<sup>296</sup>. Then He united the earth, by removing the difference between the sensitive paradise and the earth which we inhabit<sup>297</sup>. He also united the earth with the heavens, showing thus the nature of the sensitive things as only one which gravitates towards itself. And again He united the sensitive ones with the intelligible ones, proving also that the nature of the created ones is only one, being in a tight connection through some mysterious rationality; at last, he united in a mode and according to a rationality from above nature the whole created nature with the Creator. And over each of these unions or angles He built the fortified towers of the godlike dogmas, which to sustain them and to tie them tight (6).

“And he built towers into wilderness”. The wilderness is the nature of the seen ones, namely this world in which the Word has built the pious opinions about things, giving them to the ones who ask for them; in other words He has sown into ghost the just rationalities of the natural contemplation’s dogmas.

“And he dug many fountains, for he had many flocks and in Sephila and in the plain and workers to the vines from the mountains and from Carmel, for he was a worker of the field”. The wilderness is, as I’ve said, the world or the people’s world; in this one He dug fountains by that that he has

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<sup>296</sup> Τῶν εν τοῖς πάθῃ ἴδιομάτων (Of the same sufferings (E. l. t.’s n.)). The rationality of the human nature is the same into the man and into the woman. But the passions grafted on it different characteristics into the man and into the woman. These characteristics come out from passions are cleaned by Christ from the rationality of the human nature, showing it the same into the man and into the woman. But this uniformity is done only into ghost, namely only if the bodily life is overwhelmed within them – the life of the feeling – through the ghost opened in their deep through the godlike Ghost and flooded their entire existence. Into ghost the man and the woman are the same, only the body with the corresponding feelings differentiates them.

<sup>297</sup> This earth can become again through our clean life and through the good understanding between people the sensitive paradise, which it was at the beginning. Not a geographical border separates the original paradise from the earth which we inhabit, but the border of the sin. Through Christ the earth has become again a paradise in potentiality, and therefore into development, like within the man has been inaugurated the order of the resurrection.

removed from the earth from the hearts of the worthy ones, has cleaned them of the heaviness and the thought of the earth and has widened them for being able to receive the godlike rains of the wisdom and of the knowledge, to water the flocks of Christ, namely the ones who need, for the infancy of the soul, of the moral teaching (7).

“The flocks from Sephila”. Sephila is interpreted: “narrow cauldron”. These ones indicate the ones who clean themselves through the unwilling trials and wash themselves from the defilements of the soul and of the body. These ones need to drink as a water the teaching about patience (8).

And “the flocks from the plain” show the ones who thrive, enjoying width, because the things from the right side develop their course according to their will; or the ones who thrive in good on the road of the virtues and widen themselves without passion in accomplishing the commandments, walking on the way or in their law. These ones still need to water from the word which waters them to humbleness, to communion and to together suffering with the ones who are more helplessness and to the thanksgiving for the things destined to them (9).

“The workers at the vines from the mountains” are the ones who cultivate on the heights of the contemplation the godlike and ecstatic rationality of the knowledge, which gladdens the heart (10). And the “workers at the vines from Carmel” are the ones who through contemplation exercise themselves in a high way in the science of the consummated cleaning, with the total removal of the created ones. For the Carmel is interpreted like: “the recognition (acceptance) of the circumcision”. So the one who cultivates the vine in Carmel, he cultivates the mystical idea of the circumcision through knowledge, circumcising from around the mind everything that is matter and all the material ones, but without reckoning in a Jewish manner their shame as glory (11). The Scripture says that also these ones need the water of the godlike wisdom from the fountains dug into wilderness, for, on the measure of the faith, each one to receive the appropriate word for what he

believes, namely the grace through which to teach others the saving word<sup>298</sup>. For through this our Lord Jesus Christ takes care in a wonderful manner of the everyone`s soul, being given the fact that He is and He makes Himself ceaselessly the good and skilful agriculturist, Who works everything that has been told before for our salvation.

This is in short one of the meanings of the words from before. This meaning has Jesus Christ in its center. According to another meaning they refer to each one`s mind, describing the consummation of the ones strengthened by the fear and by the love of God (12). But before showing this meaning of the words, I have to show my wonder that was possible to be told about Uzziah, who, according to the history, was the king of Judaea, that he had workers to the vines from Carmel, being known that this mountain wasn`t in Judas` s kingdom, but fell in the kingdom of Israel, the capital city of Israel itself being built on its top (13). But, as one can see, the Scripture, wanting to arise our lazy cogitation to the searching of the truth, it has mixed in the fabric of the history what didn`t exist ever.

Uzziah, therefore, it is the mind which has achieved the godlike strength for doing and for contemplation<sup>299</sup>. For, as I`ve said, Uzziah it is interpreted through “the strength of God”. And Uzziah sought, he says, on God in the days of Zachariah, who was advising him in the fear of God”. Zachariah it is interpreted: “the remembrance of God”. Therefore the mind, until it has within the live remembrance of God, it searches through contemplation for God. Not anyhow, but in the fear of the Lord, namely through fulfilling the commandments (14). For the one who searches through a contemplation without deeds, he doesn`t find the Lord, because he hasn`t searched for Him in the fear of the Lord.

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<sup>298</sup> One could translate this passage also like this: “that, on the measure of the faith, each one to receive the due rationality from the believed ones, namely the grace of the savior teaching”.

<sup>299</sup> Having in view the two stages of the spiritual ascension.

"And the Lord made him thriving". The Lord destines thriving to anyone who does deeds into knowledge<sup>300</sup>, by teaching him the modes of the commandments and unveiling to him the true rationalities of the things<sup>301</sup>.

"And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem". The one who thrives in searching for the Lord through contemplation, together with fear, namely with the fulfilling of the commandments, he builds towers in Jerusalem, namely erecting, in the simple and peaceful state of the soul the rationalities about Godhead (15).

"And over the gate of the angle". The gate of the angle, namely of the churchly faith, it is pious life. Above it the gnostic mind (which occupies itself with the knowledge) builds, as some powerful and unconquered towers, the dogmas` fortifications about embodiment, consisting of different teachings, as of the same number of stones; likewise, the different modes of the virtues through which it is ensured the fulfillment of the commandments.

"And over the angle of the valley". The valley is the body. And its angle is its union with the soul through the commandments` law. Over this union the mind builds, as on a tower, the knowledge, which submits the body to the soul, through the ghost`s law<sup>302</sup>.

"And over angles". Many, he says, are the angles over which the mind powerfully strengthened into God has built the towers. One of these angles is the union of the particular ones with the general ones of the same nature, through the same rationality of the existence. So unite themselves for instance the individuals with the species, the species with the genres and the genres with the being. In this way the edges are united in a

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<sup>300</sup> Or: to anybody who unites the doing with the knowledge, or seeks to penetrate the meaning of the commandments which he is fulfilling.

<sup>301</sup> The modes of the commandments: the ways of applying them practically; their rationalities or of the things; their meanings, their purposes in the ensemble of the Universe and of the existence.

<sup>302</sup> The knowledge from here isn't the gnosis in general, through which God is known, but the διάγνωσις (diagnosis (E. l. t.'s n.)), through which the man recognizes the union between body and soul and consequently the necessity for the body to obey to the soul.

unique manner<sup>303</sup>. Over these particular realizations and through them are transparent the general rationalities, being done, as some angles, the many and various unions of the ones which are different to each other (17). Such angles are: the union of the mind with the feeling, of the earth with the heavens, of the sensitive ones with the intelligible ones, and of the nature with its rationality (18). Over all of these the contemplative mind elevates its true conceptions through its science, building wisely the spiritual towers over these angles, namely elevating over these unions the dogmas which sustain them.

"And he fortified them, and built towers into wilderness and dug many fountains". The one who has been able to liberate his senses from passions and to deliver his soul from the slavery of the senses, he has succeeded to erect a wall against the devil's entrance in the mind through the mediation of the senses. That's why it is said that he elevated into wilderness, namely into the natural contemplation, as some fortified towers, the pious opinions about the things, into which seeking himself refuge, he doesn't fear the devils, which plunder into this wilderness, namely into the nature of the seen ones and deceive the mind through senses, pulling it towards the darkness of the nescience (20).

"And he du many fountains", namely different good habits, capable of receiving through gnosis (knowledge) for sharing them to others, the teachings destined from above. "For he had many flocks in Sephila and in the plain and workers to the vineyards and from the mountains and from Carmel, for he was an agriculturist". The one who fight according to the law for the truth, through the weapons from the right side and from the left side, he refreshed the power of patience of the flocks from Sephila, namely the movements of the soul dedicated to the body, which is exercised in bearing the unwilling trials, watering them with reasons for resistance from the diverse

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<sup>303</sup> Μοναδικώς (unique (E. l. t.'s n.)). In each individual the particular meets the universal in a unique way, which is not repeated anymore.

habits of the virtue and of the knowledge, like some dug fountains; and on the ones from the plain, namely the movements of the soul which prosper in the ones from the right side, or in the width of the virtues, he waters them with rationalities (with thoughts) of humbleness and temperance, for not to fall also in the ones from the left side and to not be brought out either the ones from the right side.

“And workers at the vineyards from mountain and from Carmel”. The workers from the vineyards from mountains are the pious thoughts<sup>304</sup> of the contemplation, which tarry on the height and cultivate the ecstatic and secret knowledge (21). And the ones from Carmel are the thoughts which cultivate the science of the dispassion and of the consummated cleaning, through the removal of all the things and cares, as a foreskin which must be cut off, because it surrounds the soul’s power of fructifying. These thoughts totally cut off from around the mind, through knowledge, its affection towards the earthly things<sup>305</sup>. Because the Carmel it means the “acceptance (the recognition) of the circumcision”.

At the end it is said about Uzziah that he is an agriculturist. This is because each mind, which has achieved the strength from God in order of the contemplation, it is like a true agriculturist, guarding clean of tares the godlike seeds of the good ones, through its endeavor and care, until it has in itself the remembrance of God which sustains it. For he says: “And he was searching for God in the days of Zacharias, into the fear of the Lord”. And Zacharias interpreted in the Greek language it means the remembrance of God.

That’s why let’s ceaselessly pray to the Lord, for His savior remembrance to remain always within us, for our spiritual victories to not break our soul, determining it to extol itself with pride and to dare things from above nature, like Uzziah.

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<sup>304</sup> In Greek language the thoughts are of masculine gender (*λογισμοί* (thoughts (E. l. t.’s n.))).

<sup>305</sup> The relation or the connection of the mind with the earthly things.

## Scholia

1. Through the wonderful tent it is understood the holy body of God, which he took it from our nature, because He gave it existence into Himself, without seed. And the house is His mental soul, for the Word by making Himself man has united to Himself, in an unspoken way, a body endowed with mental soul, to clean what is alike with what alike. And the place is the Word Himself, Who has crystallized in Himself, according to the hypostasis, our nature, in an unchanged way. To this tent or body let then us reach, by sanctifying our body through virtues. For through theses ones it can become, according to the grace of the Ghost, of the same form with the body of His glory. And let's enter inside the house of God, or in the contemplation cleaned of any mix, through the simple and undivided knowledge, reaching at the mental soul itself of the Lord, to have also us the "mind of Christ"<sup>306</sup>, like the Apostle says, through the impartation with the Holy Ghost. Then we will have become according to the grace also us to Him, what He made Himself, through nature, according to oikonomia, for us<sup>307</sup>.

2. The cornerstone is the connection of the angle, namely of the Church.

3. Through the gate of the angle it is understood the embodiment, which is the gate of the Church; and through towers, the right dogmas about embodiment.

4. Through the angle of the valley it is understood that union according to the nature of the body with the soul and that connection according to the ghost of the soul with the body, when this one is servant of the virtue.

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<sup>306</sup> Philippians: 3: 20: KJB: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:"; ROB: "As about us, our city is in heavens from where we also wait for a Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ."

<sup>307</sup> Through virtues, but not without grace, we reach at the body of the Lord, namely our body is shaped according to His body in all its feelings; through the simple and undivided knowledge we reach at His soul, our soul being in a pure contemplation of God. Then we have that human "mind of Christ", namely we climb there, where He descended, we meet Him in the crossroads point of the godhead with the humanity, in the state of the deified man.

5. Angles he generally calls the different unions of the creatures, namely the unions of the different more general natures between themselves, to give a unique harmony.

6. Each union of the mentioned creatures it is done according to a rationality of the wisdom. The Scripture calls these ones the towers of the angles. For the existential rationality which we know in each creature<sup>308</sup> and the rationality which connects all of them into a sole harmony, it is like a fortification and like a tower of each creature.

7. Fountains he called the hearts which receive the heavenly gifts of the saint knowledge, after they have been dug through the strong word of the commandments. These hearts have rejected like some boulders, the love for passions and the nature's affection for the sensitive things and they have been filled up with that knowledge into ghost, come from above, which washes the passions and gives life to the virtues.

8. The flocks from Sephila are the ones who learn through many tribulations the moral philosophy and who need the words (rationalities) which urge to patience.

9. The flocks from the plain are the ones who easily advance on the road of the virtues and remain unharmed by evil. These ones need the words (rationalities) which urge to thanksgiving.

10. Through mountains in general it is understood the high contemplation of the nature into ghost. This one is cultivated by the ones who have rejected the sensitive hallucinations and have reached at rationalities, through the mediation of the virtues.

11. Carmel is the height of the recognition of the circumcision<sup>309</sup>. And the circumcision is the removal of the

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<sup>308</sup> τε κατ ούσιαν της επ αύτω γνώσε (either, in essence, he has known connection into it (E. l. t.'s n.)). So it could be translated also like this: that rationality according to the being, on the basis of which we recognize the respective creature. Either in one sense, or in another, the rationality of whatever creature it is a fortification which cannot be broken down, or altered. This rationality keeps together like a tower the parts of a creature. In the same way does also the more general rationality of more things, like these ones.

<sup>309</sup> The height of the recognition of the necessity of the circumcision.

natural affection towards the ones who are changing<sup>310</sup> and the suppression of the affectionate connection of the mind towards creatures. The vine of this state is the rationality of the Providence, which destined the sober ecstasy. This one is cultivated by the men of the thoughts which are moving only around the simple and without beginning monad. For the one who moves himself only towards this one he has cut from himself, like a foreskin, the affection which covers the cause of the creation of the things.

12. Another meaning of these ones.

13. It is shown with courage that the history of the things it might have happened in conformity to this place.

14. Through the fear of God he indicated the active philosophy, by showing the end through the beginning. For “the beginning of the wisdom it is the fear of God”<sup>311</sup>.

15. The high thought about godhead it is a tower into soul, fortified through implying the commandments.

16. What the gate of the angle is?

17. The rationalities of the particular ones, in union with the general ones, they do the unions of the different ones, because the more general rationalities embrace in a unitary way the rationalities of the particular ones, to which the particular thing refer naturally.

18. There is also among these ones a dimension of the relation into ghost, which does their union together.

19. Observe how it must be understood the word “he fortified”.

20. The one who has achieved a pious opinion about each thing, he doesn't fear anymore the devils which deceive the people through the seen things.

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<sup>310</sup> ή της κατά φύσιν σχέσης προς γένεσιν αφαίρεσης (of the nature of relation to deduction (E. I. t.'s n.)). It is the pleasure for the things caught in the torrent of the becoming. Or the pleasure for the phenomenon of the emergence and growth of the things and the sadness for the phenomenon of theirs withering and disappearing.

<sup>311</sup> Proverbs: 1: 7: KJB: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”; ROB: “The fear of God is the beginning of the wisdom; the mindless ones despise the wisdom and the self-control.”

21. The vine produced wine, the wine causes drunkenness, and the drunkenness generates ecstasy. Consequently also the active rationality, which is the vine, cultivated through virtues, it gives birth to knowledge; and the knowledge gives birth to the happy ecstasy, which brings the mind off the connection with the feeling (the work of the senses).

### **Question no. 49**

*What does it mean the things said in the same book: "And Hezekiah saw that Senaeherb comes in front of him to fight against Jerusalem. And the elders and the mighty ones took counsel, to clog the springs of the waters and the river which was passing through the city"<sup>312</sup>. What all of these mean according to their higher meaning?*

### **Answer**

Hezekiah is the mind which has girded the working philosophy with the knowledge and the godlike power of discernment against the enemy power. Because Hezekiah it means, according to his name, the godlike power of mastery. That's why he reigns over Jerusalem, namely over the soul, or it is the vision of the peace, in other words over the knowing contemplation, liberated from passions (1). When this one sees the enemy power turned against, it takes counsel with the elders and with the mighty ones to clog the water springs from outside the city. And the chieftains of such a mind are the rationality of the faith, of the hope and of love, which master

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<sup>312</sup> II Chronicles: 32: 2-3: KJB: "And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, // He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him."; ROB: "When Hezekiah saw that Senaeherb came with the thought to fight against Jerusalem, // He decided together with his advisers and his valiant ones to clog the water spring which were outside the city and these ones helped him."

like some elders over all the godlike meanings and thoughts from the soul. They advise wisely the mind and in the same time they strengthen it against the enemy power and show to it the modalities of destroying that power. And that is because without faith, hope and love, the mind cannot stop the evil ones, neither to be victorious in the good ones.

The faith convinces the warred mind to seek refuge to God, giving courage to it to dare through the spiritual weapons which it puts at hand. The hope becomes the most not-liar guarantor of the godlike help, promising the destruction of the enemy powers. And love makes it to be difficult to be shaken, better said totally unmovable from the godlike love, even when it is warred, fixing into the sake after God all its natural power (2).

And in fact the interpreted names of the chieftains, they correspond to the said ones. Hezekiah's Chieftains were at that time at Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, the treasurer (the supervisor), Somas the writer and Joah, the son of Asaph the chronicler. Eliakim it means "the resurrection of God", and his father Hilkiah it means "the part of God". And in fact the resurrection of God within us through faith it is the first and unique son of the part of God, namely of the true knowledge (3). This faith, united with the due supervising of the conscience, namely with the gift of the discernment, limpidly distinguishes between the willing temptations` inrush and the unwilling ones.

And Somas the writer it means "turning back", limpidly showing the fullest meaning of the godlike hope, without which there is no possibility of anybody's turning towards God (4). And characteristic to the hope is to write, namely to learn the future ones and to lay them under the eye as being present; then to convince the ones warred by the enemy power that God Who defends them is not far from them, and for Him the saint carry on the fight.

At last, Joah, the son of Asaph, the chronicler, it is interpreted like "the brotherhood of God", and Asaph his father like "assembly". Consequently, out of the gathering and uniting

around the godlike ones of the soul's powers, namely of the rational, impulsive and lustful one, there is born love. Through this one, the ones who have achieved through grace an equal honor at God (for the brotherhood it means the grace of the equal honoring), inscribing into memory the brightness of the godlike beauty, they preserve within them the not-wiped desire after godlike love, which inscribes and imprints in the thinking part of the soul the pure beauty (5).

That being the way things are, as has been shown somehow also by interpreting the names, any girded mind, like Hezekiah, with godlike power, it has next to itself like some elders or chieftains, in the first place, the power of the rationality. Out of this one it is born the knowing faith, which teaches the mind in an unspoken manner that the Lord is always present, and the hope, due to which he has present the future ones as the present ones are. Secondly, it has the lusting power, through which comes to existence the love for God. Through this one the mind willingly fixing itself into the sake after the all-holy godhead, it is inspired by the most powerful desire after the beloved One; at last it has next to itself the power of the wrath, through which it is lit with strength by the godlike peace, giving impulse to the movement of the desire towards desiring God (6). Any mind has these powers working together with itself to the abolishment of the sin and to founding and maintaining the virtue, like some elders, for they are the first powers of the soul and they even make the soul's being whole, and then like some chieftains, for they have mastery over the movements which start from them and have control through the mind's will, which moves them, upon the works submitted to them (7). They advise the mind and help it, to clog the water springs, which were, or better said they are, outside city. Because always what is past for history is present, in a mysterious way, in the spiritual meaning.

Having these three powers healthy and undeceived, the mind gathers the much people, namely the pious movements

and thoughts, which naturally start out of them<sup>313</sup>. And the waters from outside the city, namely from outside the soul, which form the river that passes through the middle of the city, they are the thoughts which flow into the soul, sent through each sense from the corresponding sector of the sensitive life, which crossed the soul like a river which crosses through the city (8).

As long as it is crossed through by this knowledge, the soul doesn't reject the sensitive images and hallucinations, through which the cunning and destroying power uses to start war against the soul. That's why Hezekiah says: "Lest king Assur to come and to find much water and to be victorious"<sup>314</sup>. It is like the perspicacious mind would say towards its powers, in the time of the invasions: "Let's stop the natural contemplation and occupy ourselves only with the prayer and with working the body, through the active philosophy (from these ones the prayer is it imagined through the ascension of

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<sup>313</sup> The unification of all the soul's tendencies in a good direction gives a great power to the people. But it is very difficult to be done. This is because there are some tendencies which make opposition. And then a war is started inside man for defeating the recalcitrant ones. Behold how Blondel describes this strategy: "There is within the man a multiplicity of tendencies, of appetites more or less concerted or divergent, a poly-phychism of which it was possible to be told that they are like a numerous people which is to stay under the leadership of under the government of the rationality and of the will and among which there can be found both the docile and disciplined subjects, and the recalcitrant and dissident ones. What was called the ascesis and the spiritual fight it is not else but the applicable manifestation and method in this inward history, in this militia hominis adversus et propter semet-ipsum" (man's campaign against him and his account of self (E. I. t.'s n.)). "And this is because in front of any defined and decided attitude arises, out of contradiction spirit, the party of the discontent ones... Any initial effort tit is like a declaration of war against the laxity and the scattering of the living forces, which also have the instinct of independence and conservation". These ones awaken within us "strange or hostile states of conscience, new desires which arise themselves against the will". (M. Blondel, L'Action, volume II, p. 194-6). The fierce fight starts only in the ones who have decided for a life more conform to the godlike commandments. And upon Hezekiah the enemies are coming after they have seen the consolidation work which he proceeded to accomplish.

<sup>314</sup> II Chronicles: 32: 4: KJB: "So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?"; ROB: "Then a multitude of people gathered together and clogged all the watersprings and the creek which was flowing through the middle of the country, saying: Not to come the king of Assyria and finding much water, to strengthen himself."

the king in the temple of God, and the body's working through dressing Hezekiah with sackcloth), lest through the ideas of the sensitive things the cunning one to sneak within us their images and shapes<sup>315</sup>. Because through these ones would be born within us the passions for the seen things, the rational work from inside us ceasing to penetrate through the mediation of the feeling (perception) toward the intelligible realities, and thus the cunning one would succeed to crumble down the city, namely the soul, and to drag us in Babylon, namely into the confusion of the passions".

The one who, consequently, during the passions' stirring up, he closes valiantly the senses and consummately rejects the imagination and the remembrance of the sensitive ones and totally stops the natural movements of the mind directed towards researching the ones from outside, that one has clogged, like Hezekiah, the waters of the springs which are outside the city and has cut the river, which passes through the middle of the city. To these ones he has been helped by the mentioned powers and by the much people gathered, namely the pious thoughts of each power. By doing so, the soul has overcome and has ashamed, through the hand of God, the cunning and tyrant power, raised against, killing, at the godlike command, through the rationality capable to destroy the passions, like through an angel, one hundred and eighty five thousands of its soldiers. And this number indicates the habit of the sin which has penetrated in an irrational manner within the three powers of the soul through the sensitive ones, as also the work of the senses directed towards them (11).

Consequently the mind which wants to scatter through knowledge the unseen crowding, it mustn't occupy itself neither with the natural contemplation or to do something else during the attack of the cunning devils, but only to pray, to tame its body with toils, to extinguish all the zeal of the earthly thought

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<sup>315</sup> The natural contemplation isn't bad. But it can be done without danger except in the second stage, after cleaning the passions, but even then it must be stopped when it is felt the temptation from the evil one to associate to the meanings or to the images of the things, thought of lust.

and to guard the city's walls (namely the virtues which guard the soul, or the methods of preserving the virtues, namely the restraint and the patience), through good thoughts, innate to inborn to our nature (12). It is also needed that no thought to answer through contradictions to someone of the spiritual enemies from outside. This is lest the one who brings into the soul cunning revenges, by alluring it through the ones from the right hand, to separate the soul from God, by stilling its desire and, deceiving the soul through what seem to be good ones, to attract its cogitation, which it searches for the good ones, towards the evil ones. This deceiver is imagined through Rabshakeh, the chieftain of Assyria's king Senaehirib, about whom the Scripture says that he speaks Jewish language. Rabshakeh it is interpreted: "strong to the drink united with the kisses", or "the one who has many kisses". Because the cunning devil which uses to war the mind through the ones from the right hand, he speaks Jewish language, bringing into the soul the imagined virtue, but an untrue one, cunning twists and by showing a deceiving and destroying love, than which are better the wounds of the friend who strikes. For it is said: "Better is to trust in the wounds of the friend, than in the kisses of the enemy"<sup>316</sup> (13).

And Senaehirib is interpreted "the temptation of the dryness", or "sharpened teeth". He is the devil which, truly draining through the thoughts sharpened towards evil (for this I think it means the "sharpened teeth", the godlike water of the knowledge which flows into us, through the word that he produces in the ones who receive it, he truly accomplishes his job indicated by the name. He is and he is truly called "the dryness's temptation", like the one who makes lacked of any impartation of life into the Ghost the ones who fall into his cunning tricks.

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<sup>316</sup> Proverbs: 27: 6: KJB: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."; (The Parables of Solomon) ROB: "Of good faith are the wounds caused by a friend, and the kisses of the one who hates you are cunning."

Or maybe it is said to Senaehlerib, namely the devil, "the dryness's temptation", for the fact that he is needy and poor, not having any own power when inrushes against us (14). And in fact, without the sensitive things, through which uses to war the soul, he wouldn't be able to harm us. That's why he needs for our submission the springs from outside the city, namely the meanings of the material things through which use to penetrate into the soul the appearances and the images of the sensitive things. For the senses, by receiving their imprinting, they often reach, due to the affection towards those things, a cunning and harming weapon in the hand of the devil, towards the removal of the godlike adornment from the soul, surrendering to the enemy, through the slackness, the power of the rationality from within us.

But the one who through the mentioned restraint closes manly his senses, and through the soul's powers elevates walls at the entrances of the sensitive images toward the mind, he easily scatters the cunning tricks of the devil, making him to turn back with shame on the way on which he has come. And the way on which the devil comes are the matters which seem to be necessary for sustaining the body (15). So that one forces him to turn back in his country, namely in the world of the confusion and chaos, killing him through the cunning thoughts themselves, born out from him, to which he has changed their direction towards bringing back the peace. For the one who could defeat the devil through the cunning thoughts themselves brought by that one, to which he has given a better use, he has killed Senaehlerib through his sons and has chased him back in Armenia, his country. That one has used the thoughts towards strengthening the peace, just that thoughts which have troubled the soul through senses. This is because Armenia is interpreted through "settling the peace"<sup>317</sup>. And the settling of the peace is done through achieving the godlike virtues. The mind by turning the thoughts in this direction, those thoughts which have been bullying it before, through senses, towards the

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<sup>317</sup> II Samuel (II Kings): 19: 36.

reproachable passions, he is killing the devil which gives them birth towards the perdition of the human nature (16).

Well and wisely Hezekiah worked therefore, according to the spiritual meaning of the Scripture, by clogging the springs` waters, which were outside Jerusalem, due to Senaeherib, the Assyrians` king. The springs from outside the city, namely of the soul, are all the sensitive ones. And the river, which flows through the middle of the city, it is the sum of knowledge gathered through natural contemplation, from the meanings of the sensitive things. This one flows through the middle of the soul, being at the border between mind and feeling (17). For the knowledge of the sensitive things isn't totally stranger neither to the power of the mind or totally hangs on the work of the senses (on perception), but it is at the meeting place of the mind with the feeling or of the feeling with the mind, realizing through itself the connection between them (18).

It hangs on the feeling (on the sensitive perception), because it comprises the imprints left by the images of the sensitive things; and also on the mind, because it transforms in rationalities imprints left by these images; that's why rightly was called the knowledge of the things the river which flows through the middle of the city, for this knowledge is the bridge between the two extremities, namely between mind and feeling. This knowledge is the one to be clogged, in the time of passions` rushing in, by the one who consciously scatters the hidden concentrations of the cunning devils, to avoid the danger of entering the material images into the mind. And by doing so, he kills one hundred and eighty five thousands enemies, namely the sinner habit, through the mediation of the sensitive things; also he kills the senses` work directed towards the sensitive ones, namely the irrational work of the natural powers through senses. Because the number six, either he is composed by unites, or by tens, or by hundreds, or by other multiples of these ones, it indicates to the familiarized ones with the science of the numbers the habit doer of virtue or of sin, in proportion with the multiple from which it is composed, namely with the

disposition which stays at the basis of this or of that habit. With this number six “tying”, “adding” or “uniting” the number five, are indicated the senses, namely the power, of the habit, or their work, consecrated to the sensitive ones, “adjoined”, or “added”, or “combined” with the natural powers of the soul. For instance if “it is tied” five with six as unites, namely simple with simple, it appear as power (as potency) the capacity of working through senses. And if “it is added” to the number six separately multiplied the number five composed by unites, it is showed the habit of working through senses on the basis of the soul’s power. And if, at last, “is united” with the number six separately multiplied, the number five also separately multiplied, it is indicated the effective doing of a thing on the basis of the power, of the habit and of the working through senses, namely the bringing to accomplishment of the virtue or of the sin, as the number would have a evil meaning, either or a meaning of praise, according to the respective place from the Scripture<sup>318</sup>. In the present place, the number six multiplied with more tens, “being added” with five, composed by units, results the number 185 (180+5) and it shows the habit of the natural faculties with committing the sin through senses, because this number it is in the present place from Scripture in a bad meaning (19). This habit is killed through the godlike rationality, as by an angel, the mind, which finds itself more on the prayer, than on its own power, and it reckons only God like cause or any victory and of nay overcoming upon the devil.

Consequently, the one who during the temptations` rushing in, he abstains himself from the natural contemplation

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<sup>318</sup> Number 5 represents the senses; the number 6 being composed by  $2 \times 3$  it represents the three powers (faculties) of the soul. The “tying”, the “adding” or the “uniting” of those numbers represents an ever fuller union. To them correspond the “adjoining”, the “adding” and the “combining” of the soul’s powers with the senses, also in a gradation. For instance 5 “tied” with 6, a simple units, it represents the simple potency “adjoining” of the senses with the soul’s powers; the multiple of 6 ‘added’ to 5 (for instance 180+5) it represents the “adding” of the senses to the soul’s powers and it means the habituation of these ones to work through senses. And the multiple of 6 “united” with the multiple of 5, it represents the “combining” of the soul’s powers with the senses in full synthesis of accomplishing the good deed or of the sin, on the basis of the potency and of the habituation (see also the Scholia 18-19).

and insists only into prayer, gathering his mind from everything and concentrating it in itself and in God, he kills the habit of the soul's natural powers of working the evil through senses by moving itself against nature. By doing so, he send back the devil with same, being given the fact that that one doesn't dispose anymore of the mentioned depreciation, in which trusting with his usual haughtiness he has come upon the soul, arising himself through haughty thoughts against the truth. Knowing, trying and doing this thing, the great David, who has more than everybody the experience of the wars in thought, he says: "Whilst the lawless one stood before me, I have remained mute and deaf and I humbled myself and I kept my silence about the good ones"<sup>319</sup>. After him the godlike Jeremiah orders to the people to not go out from the city, due to the sword of the enemies who surrounded it from all quarters<sup>320</sup>. And whether the blessed Abel would have kept this order and he wouldn't have gone out together with Cain in the field, namely in the ocean of the natural contemplation, before reaching at dispassion, the law of the body wouldn't have killed him, which is also called Cain, by rushing upon him with cunningness and by deceiving through the ones from the right side during the contemplation of the things, before the consummated habituation (20). But by not doing so, he was killed by Cain, on whom, like his name shows him, Adam, the first man, achieved him like the first fruit of his sin, which wasn't created by God simultaneously with the man in Paradise. This is because Cain is also interpreted as "achieving". Also Dina, the daughter of the great Jacob, if she wouldn't have gone out with the daughters of the local peoples, namely, with the sensitive hallucinations, Sechem, the son of

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<sup>319</sup> Psalms: 38: 2: KJB: "I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred."; 39: 2: ROB: "I was mute and I humbled myself and neither I spoke of good and my pain was renewed."

<sup>320</sup> Jeremiah: 6: 25: KJB: "Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side."; ROB: "Do not go out in the field, neither hit the road, because the sword of the enemy and the horror are everywhere."

Enor, wouldn't have humiliated her<sup>321</sup>. Sechem is interpreted like "back" and Enor like "donkey", namely the body. So the back of the body, namely Sechem of Enor, it is the law from behind, not the one from before, namely the last one not the first one. Because at the beginning, namely before (before being commit the transgression of the godlike commandment), didn't have human body, namely Enor, the sin's law, namely on Sechem, but the sin's law sprouted out later, due to disobedience (21). The Scripture knowing this and wanting to indicate the later emergence of this law, called it Sechem, namely "back", or what is later, because the back shows through nature what at the end.

Therefore is good that before the consummated habituation, to start with the natural contemplation, lest, trying to find out the spiritual rationalities from the seen creatures, to gather, by not paying attention, passions. This is because in the not-consummated (imperfect) ones there rather master the external countenances of the seen things, which preoccupy the senses, than the rationalities of the things hidden in countenances, which preoccupy the soul.

### Scholia

1. The simple contemplation of the things needs a soul liberated of passions. This soul is called Jerusalem, for the consummated virtue and for the immaterial knowledge comprised into it. This soul is achieved when are removed not only the passions, but also the sensitive imaginations, which the Scripture called them the springs from outside.

2. The faith comforts and encourages the warred mind, strengthening it with the hope of the help. And the trust, placing under our eyes the help in which we believe, we reject the enemies' inrush. At the end the love exhausts the power of

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<sup>321</sup> The place from Jeremiah and the examples of Abel and of Dina he uses them in the same senses like Nilus the Ascetic (Ascetic Word, chapters 46-47, The Romanian Philokalia, volume I, First Edition, p. 196).

the attack (*προσβολή*<sup>322</sup>) of the mind's enemies, totally weakening it, through the thirst after God.

3. The first resurrection of God within us, after he was killed through nescience, it is the well attended faith through the deeds of the commandments.

4. The things correspond, he says, to the names. This is because without expecting a pleasant or an unpleasant thing nobody turns himself towards good.

5. Nothing gathers the scattered ones like the love does, which unites the leaning of their will, sustained by a sole thought. And the sign of its presence is the equal honoring of everybody.

6. Without the power (faculty) of the rationality, he says, there doesn't exist knowing knowledge. And without knowledge there cannot be the faith<sup>323</sup>, out of which comes like fruit the hope, through which the believer is with the future ones as with the present ones. Likewise without the lusting power there cannot be the sake, of which end (final end) is the love. This is because to love something is proper to lust; finally, without the power of the wrath, which strengthens the lust to reach at the union with delights it, the peace cannot come, whether the "peace" it truly means the untroubled and total possession of the desired thing.

7. The rationality, he says, it is the spring of all the knowing thoughts (gnostic), as the wrath and the lust of the impulsive and lusting ones.

8. Hezekiah, in a higher meaning, it is the mind which philosophizes with the deed, as the city is the soul and the spring is the different forms of the sensitive things. The waters are their imagination or meanings, and the river is the knowledge gathered from the meanings of the sensitive things through the natural contemplation.

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<sup>322</sup> Invasion (E. l. t.'s n.).

<sup>323</sup> It is about the progressed faith, enlightened by evidence, and not about the faith from the beginning.

9. Must not, he says, the one who hasn't yet cleaned himself of passions to start with the natural contemplation. This is because the icons of the sensitive things can give to the mind a passionate form<sup>324</sup>, if it isn't totally liberated of passions.

10. The mind which tarries with the imagination to the countenances of the sensitive things for the sake of the feeling, it becomes the creator of some unclean passions, not penetrating through contemplation towards the intelligible realities related to it.

11. When the rationality is without mind, and the anger is precipitated and the lust is irrational, then becomes master upon the soul the nescience, the tyranny and the dissoluteness. Out of these ones is born the habit of the sin with the deed, braided with the diverse pleasures of the senses. This one is indicated by the number of the 185000. This is because by multiplying 60 to 3, for the consummated impulse of each power (faculty) towards evil and adding 5, for the pleasure which is into senses, we obtain this number, which it means the habit which does the evil. The devil by having at its disposal this habit, it enters forcedly into the soul. But God kills it like through an angel, through the rationality of the knowing (gnostic) wisdom and liberates the soul, this true Jerusalem, and the mind from the soul, from the danger of being enslaved by the sin.

12. The people from the walls are the innate thought of our nature.

13. The friend is here the Lord. The wounds from Him are the diverse kind of trying, brought in order of salvation upon each one, towards tormenting the body or the bodily thought, for the ghost to be saved in the day of the Lord. The enemy is the devil. And the kisses are the diverse pleasures of

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<sup>324</sup> Τυπούσ προς παθός τον νου ((the types of the passion in the mind) E. l. t.'s n.). It is the idea which, to Evagrius and Nilus the Ascetic, it comes from Aristotle (see The Romanian Philokalia, volume I, the preface to Nilus the Ascetic).

the senses, through which, by deceiving the soul, it convinces it to separate itself from the love of the One Who has created it.

14. Senaehlerib is interpreted as “the temptation of the dryness”, on one hand because it dries the hearts of the ones who listen to him, separating these hearts from the grace out of which spring the holy thoughts, and on the other hand because itself is dry, as one who is poor and needy, not having anything of his own. That’s why he hides cunningly, like a thief, in the countenances of the sensitive things, when rushes in against us.

15. Everything that is redundant and over the natural need, it is intemperance. And this is the devil’s way towards the soul. But also through it that one turns back with shame in his country, when the nature is advised by restraint. Or again, the way is formed by the natural affects, which being satisfied above need they bring the devil into the soul, and when they are satisfied according to the need they send the devil towards his country. And the country of the devil is the habit and the thickened confusion of the vice, in which he always lives, and to which he brings the ones defeated by the love for the material things.

16. He who turns the thought towards virtue, he has given rest to them, by putting a distance between them and the fickle throng of the passions.

17. The mind, by uniting according to the nature, through the mediation of the rationality, the work of the senses, it gather the true knowledge from the natural contemplation, and this knowledge was called river which crosses the soul, for the presence of the cogitation into the work of the senses.

18. The tilting of the will it has “next” to itself in a natural way the virtuality of a competence and it is “added” to it a habit, for the habit is added to competence. And the habit is “combined” always with the work, even this one it is not continuously shown, the material conditions being often absent.

19. Through the “tying” of the numbers he understands the enunciation of the simple numbers up to 10, being differed through the conjunction “end”, for instance 6 and 5. It is shown the potential competence for working the virtue or the sin, like it is told in the Scripture about this kind of numbers in a good or in a bad sense. By “adding” a number he understands the adding of a simple number, consisting of units, to the number multiplied in itself. In this case, again they differ through the conjunction “and”; for instance: sixty and<sup>325</sup> five, or one hundred eighty and<sup>326</sup> five, like our number is. It shows not only the competence for working through the senses, but also the habit to consummate the virtue of the vice through senses. And through the “union” of the numbers, he understands the meeting of the multiplied numbers within themselves, which also differ through the conjunction “and”; for instance 60 and 40, or 500 and 600 and the ones alike. This shows not only the virtual competence and the habit of working, but also the work of the virtues or of the sin through the senses on the basis of the habit. Consequently the one who know the meaning of each number up to ten, he will know what it means in the Scripture each number, according to how it is connected, added, or united. The unity (1) it means the not-mixing, the half (2) the difference, the third (3) the equal and the intelligible, four (4) indicates the sensitive things, the five (5) the senses and the circle, six (6) the activity and the consummation, seven (7) the roundness and the not-mixing, eight (8) the stability and the stillness, nine (9) the border between matter and shape, or between the sensitive ones and the feeling, and ten (10) the all-fullness.

20. Cain is the law of the body, which is born by the same one, later, through repentance. This one is killed by Abel, for he proceeded to the contemplation of the nature before

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<sup>325</sup> In Romanian language the conjunction “and” participates to the forming of the numbers and separates the units, the tens, the hundreds, the thousands, etc. In English language it would have been simply: “sixty five” and ‘one hundred eighty five’; we have chosen to add “and” to not lose the idea of the text. (E. l. t.’s n.)

<sup>326</sup> Idem supra.

achieving the consummated habit in this purpose. But who will kill Cain will untie himself of seven avengers, says God<sup>327</sup>. The same is also called by God in Gospel as “cunning ghost”, “which takes with him seven ghost worse than him”<sup>328</sup>. This one is maybe the thought of the bodily love for the self, or of the covetousness of the belly, to which always it follows the thought of the fornication and of the love of money, of the sadness and of the anger, of the vain idleness and of the pride. So the one who kills Cain, namely the covetousness of the belly, he had killed together with it also the passions, which sprout out after it, according to the saying: “The one who will kill Cain, he will untie himself from seven avenges”.

21. The law of the birth and of the corruptibility of the body, according to which we are born and give birth, it has penetrated later in the humans` nature due to the mistake, because we haven`t kept the deifying law of the ghost, by listening to the first commandment.

### **Question no. 50**

*What does it mean what he again says in the same book: “And prayed king Hezekiah and Isaiah the Prophet, the son of Amos, for these ones and shouted to heavens. And the Lord sent an angel and destroyed all the powerful and the war and all the*

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<sup>327</sup> Genesis: 4: 15: KJB: “And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.”; ROB: “And the Lord God said: “Not so, but everyone who will kill Cain, he will be punished sevenfold”. And the Lord God laid sign on Cain that whosoever will find him to no kill him.”

<sup>328</sup> Matthew: 12: 455: KJB: “Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”; ROB: “Then he goes and brings with him other seven ghost worse than him and, by entering, they dwell here and the later ones of than man become worse than the first ones. So it will be also with this cunning generation.”

*chieftain and the host leader in the camp of Assur. And he turned back with the shame of the face in his country?"<sup>329</sup>*

### **Answer**

The word from the Scriptures, though it has edges (is circumscribed) according to the letter, ending together with the told things, according to the ghost, in its higher meanings, it remains always borderless (Uncircumscribed). And nobody to say that he can't believe this, knowing that God Who spoke is without border (uncircumscribed) according to His nature. For the ones who want to listen with a clean heart to the advice of the Scripture, it is due to them to believe that also the word spoken by Him it resembles more to Him<sup>330</sup>. Because God is the One Who spoke, and He is according to His being not bordered, it is obvious that also the word spoken by Him is without border (1).

Therefore, even the things happened figuratively during the time of Hezekiah came to an end, by spiritually contemplating the told happenings which ended then, let's admire the wisdom of the Holy Ghost Who wrote them. For in each one who imparts the human nature He has placed the possibility to realize in themselves as it is ought and as it is due

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<sup>329</sup> II Chronicles: 32: 20-21; KJB: "And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven. // And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword."; ROB: "Then prayed king Hezekiah and Isaiah the Prophet, the son of Amos, and they shouted out with great voice to the sky. // And the Lord sent an angel who destroyed any warrior and valiant and chieftain and general from the camp of Assur, than this one turned back with shame in his country; and when he entered in the house of his god, his sons killed him there with the sword."

<sup>330</sup> The Scripture's word resembles more to the uncircumcised God, that to the limited man, from which God borrowed it. For in the mouth of God the human word widens its content to infinite, according to the one who uses it. (We strongly believe that everything is created by God, even the words which He has given to the people. But we, the limited people, cannot use the words but in a limited manner, not being able, due to our sins, to perceive all the meanings and all the powers of the words (E. l. t.'s n.)).

the meaning of the written ones. Thus, everyone who wants to become a disciple of the godlike word and to not reckon anything from the present and passing ones like the virtue, he can become another Hezekiah into ghost. And even another Isaiah, not impeded by anything to pray, to shout out to the sky, to be heard and to obtain from God, through an Angel, the destruction and the perdition of the ones who war him spiritually.

But the one who wants to understand the Holy Scripture in the light of the knowledge of Christ, as referring to the soul, he must exercise himself with all the diligence also in interpreting the names, which can clarify the whole meaning of the written ones. He needs to do this if he wants to reach at the exact understanding of the written ones and to not lower in a Jewish manner the height of the Ghost to the earth towards the Body, by closing (circumscribing) the godlike and incorruptible promises of the spiritual goods in the corruption of the passing goods, as some of the ones who call themselves Christians they do it. These ones bear in a liar way the name which derives from Christ, being proven that they deny through their deeds its meaning and they walk on a way contrary to Christ, like we will show shortly in our word.

This is because God came to us by making Himself man, besides other mysterious reasons which cannot be penetrated by any rationality, also to fulfil the law spiritually, by removing the letter, and to elevate and to make its life-maker power shown, by removing that part which kills. And the part of the law that kills is, according to the godlike Apostle, the letter, as the life-maker part of it is the ghost. For he says: "the letter kills, and the ghost makes alive"<sup>331</sup>. But if it is so, the liar Christian I've been speaking about, they have outright chosen the part contrary to Christ and they have ignored the whole

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<sup>331</sup> II Corinthians: 3: 6: KJB: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."; ROB: "The One Who has made us worthy of being servants of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the ghost; because the letter kills, and the ghost makes alive."

mystery of the embodiment. They not only have buried through the letter the whole power of the understanding and haven't wanted to be in the image and the likeness of God (3), but they rather have chosen to be on earth, according to the menace, and to turn to earth, through their affection for the letter, that toward the earth, instead of choosing the connection with the heavens, namely with the ghost, and to be kidnapped in heavens, namely into the spiritual light, for meeting the Lord, in clouds, namely in the high contemplations, and thus to be always together with Him through knowledge. That's why rightly it is due to be us disgusted by these ones, because they suffer an insupportable lost because of the nescience, but also to be sad, because they give many occasions to the Jews towards their strengthening into disbelief. But we by letting these ones to be like they want to be, let's turn us back to ourselves and to the Scripture, starting the spiritual research of the present chapter with the interpretation of the names.

Therefore Hezekiah is interpreted "the power of God"; Ahaz, his father, it means "force"; Isaiah is interpreted "the raising of God", namely the "Ascension of God"; and Amos, his father, it means "people of toiling". The "Power of God" is the virtue which kills the passions and guards the pious thoughts and which is born by the working of the commands, which isn't anything but "force", taken in a moral sense (4). Through this one we destroy, with the help of God, better said with His power, the evil Powers which resist against the good ones. And the "Height of God" is the knowledge of the truth, which is born by the "toiling" of contemplating the creatures (5) and the sweats united with the working of the virtues, which (sweats) become the parents of this toiling. Through knowledge we totally destroy the power of the lie, which resists against the truth, by humiliating and crumbling down "all the raising of the evil ghosts which rise against the knowledge of God"<sup>332</sup>.

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<sup>332</sup> II Corinthians: 10: 5: KJB: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"; ROB: "And the whole haughtiness which rises against the knowledge

And the “prayer” is the asking of those things, which God uses to give them to the people towards salvation. And this is rightly. Because if the vote ( $\varepsilon\acute{u}x\eta$  (to wish (E. l. t. `s n.))) it is the promising of those goods (virtues) which are brought to God from the part of the people, the prayer ( $\pi\acute{r}\rho o\acute{o}\sigma e\acute{u}x\eta$  (prayer ((E. l. t. `s n.))) it will be the request of those goods, which God destines them to the people towards salvation. It brings therefore the payment of the disposition with which we have made before the promises.

And the “shouting out” is the insistence and the increasing in the working of diverse modes of the virtues and into the contemplation of diverse sights of the knowledge during the rushing in of the evil devils. This one is listened to by God in a natural way more than all the others, for He rejoices more of the disposition of the ones who cultivate the virtue and the knowledge, than of a great voice.

Through “sky” it is often understood within the Holy Scripture God Himself, as somewhere John the Forerunner, the great preacher of the truth says: “The man cannot take anything from himself, if it wouldn’t be given to him from heavens”<sup>333</sup>, namely from God, for: “every good gift and every consummated gift are from above, descending from the Father of the lights”<sup>334</sup>. In this sense must be understood the word “sky” from the Scripture’s text, given in the chapter. But the Scripture also calls “sky” the heavenly powers, according to the word: “The heavens are chair to Me”<sup>335</sup>. This is because God

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of God and every thought, we enslave them, towards the listening to Christ.”

<sup>333</sup> John: 3: 27: KJB: “John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”; ROB: “John answered and said: cannot a man to take anything, if it wasn’t given to him from heavens.”

<sup>334</sup> James: 1: 17: KJB: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”; ROB: “Every good gift and every consummated gift are from above, descending from the Father of the lights, to Whom there is no change or shadow of move.”

<sup>335</sup> Isaiah: 66: 1: KJB: “THUS saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?”; ROB: “So says the Lord: “The heavens are My chair and the earth is the laying down of my feet! What kind of house will you build to Me, and what place of rest for Me?”

rests Himself in the simple and bodiless creatures. And if somebody would say that also the human mind, cleaned of all the material hallucination and adorned with the godlike rationalities of the intelligible ones, it is "sky", won't fall off, in my opinion, from the truth. But neither the one who would call "sky" the height of the spiritual knowledge from within men, he wouldn't be wrong. For verily the true knowledge becomes, like the sky, the chair of God, by receiving God to enthrone Himself into it, through the unmoveable tendency of its firm and high desire towards good. Likewise the clean work of the virtues is called "footstool of Him", for it receives upon itself the godlike soles and it doesn't let them to get dirty at all by the defilements of the body, understanding through earth the body (6).

So, king Hezekiah symbolizes, according to his name's interpretation, the virtue, because this name, translated in Greek language, it means "the power of God", and the power of God against the enemy powers it is manifested only through virtue. Ahaz, the Hezekiah's father, it is interpreted 'Force' and indicates the working of the commandments, as it has been said before. Out of this work it is born the virtue's godlike power. Isaiah the prophet symbolizes the knowledge of the high one, for his name being interpreted it means "the height of God". It indicates the height of that knowledge after God, born out of the tiredness of the diverse contemplations of the things. For Amos it means "the tiredness of the people" as I have already shown it.

Consequently, this being the meanings of the names, it is obvious that any wisdom lover and pious one, armed with virtue and knowledge, or with doing and with contemplation, when he will see rushing upon himself, through affects, the cunning Power, as the king of Assyrians went upon Hezekiah, he will reckon that he cannot have but only One help towards scattering the evils: God. And he will make This One merciful to him by shouting out voiceless, through insistence, even greater in virtue and knowledge. And in this way he will receive help

better said towards salvation, and Angel, namely a higher rationality of the wisdom and of the knowledge, which will crush every powerful and warriors one, the chieftain and army leader from the Emperor Asshur's camp (7), and he will turn that one back to his country with the shame of the face. Because the cunning and the destroying devil's kingdom, symbolized by the Assyrians' camp, starting war against the virtue and the knowledge of the people, it tries to overthrown their soul through their innate powers (faculties). Firstly it stirs up their lusting power, for desiring the against nature things, urging it to choose the sensitive ones instead of the intelligible ones; then it agitates their wrath, to fight for the sensitive things chosen by the lust: finally it teaches the rationality to contrive pleasure modes to the ones according to the senses. In one word, it places as master over this power the sensitive things, of makes reigning over these souls' faculties, the earth's law.

So, "powerful" has been called by the Scripture the cunning devil which takes over the lust and lights it towards the indecent desires of the ugly pleasures. For nothing is more powerful and more forceful than the natural lust. And "warrior" it has called the devil which places itself into wrath and makes it fighting ceaselessly for pleasures. "Chieftain" has been called the one who hidden without being seen in the countenances of the things and deceptively calls towards each of them the soul's desires through each sense. And the Scripture has called this one "chieftain" for the fact that it makes that each passion to be mastered by something corresponding from the sensitive things. Because without some sensitive thing, which to attract towards it the soul's powers, through the mediation of some sense, the passion wouldn't come to existence (8). And "army's leader" it has called the devil which abuses of the rational faculty of the soul, moving it towards contriving and finding out of all the ways which lead towards evil. Finally, the "face" of the devil is the pleasure's gilding, through which takes over any soul which hurries up to receive it and values more the

sensitive things which spell the senses than the contemplation of the intelligible ones, which fatten the mind. This “face” it ashamed by the one who has received from God, through prayer, the wisdom’s rationality, which destroys the whole enemy power, namely totally abolishes the evil tyranny which troubles the soul. For “he destroyed them”, says the Scripture, not “crushed” them. Because the crushing (*τρίψις*)<sup>336</sup> it has as effect only the ceasing of the passionate activity, and the “destruction” (*εκμηδένιση*) it is the total abolishment even of the movements from cogitation.

And the king Asshur’s country, namely of the cunning and all-evil devil, it is the thickened and tough habit of the sin or of the nescience, a habit deprived of any warmth of life which it is given by the virtue and of any spiritual light which is brought by the knowledge (10). The devil turns alone into it after the unsuccessful attempt of the attack. Because through its attack it couldn’t move the Jerusalem into this habit of itself, namely the soul loving of God and totally dispassionate which it has in itself, as an Hezekiah, the mind lightened by knowledge, which achieve the mercy of God and destroy through the Angel the evil power.

Thus I have understood the place according to my power. If somebody can see in the said ones a higher meaning, he will make us and himself joyful, by showing this more precious meaning of the written ones. For I have said before about the godlike Scripture’s word that it will always remain borderless (uncircumscribed) and bordering (circumscribing) all the ones who speak it, but being impossible to be itself bordered by the ones who speak it. Therefore even I have said something according to my power, and this is by daring a lot, I haven’t embraced the meaning of the written ones, this one being infinitely above my power.

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<sup>336</sup> We believe that it would have been more accurate σύνθλιψη (crushing); τρίψις it means “friction”. (E. l. t.’s n.)

## Scholia

1. Like God according to the being isn't submitted to the knowledge, in the same way also His word cannot be comprised into our knowledge.

2. They who stick, in a Judaic manner, their cogitation only to the letter, they expect the promises of the righteous things in this age, not knowing the soul's natural goods.

3. The one who wears the "heavenly image"<sup>337</sup>, he strives to follow in everything to the Holy Scripture, which preserves the soul through virtue and knowledge. And the one who wears "the image of the earthly one" he cultivates only the letter which sustains the bodily serving through senses, which gives birth to the passions.

4. The doing gives birth to the "virtue", like Ahaz to Hezekiah.

5. The contemplation gives birth to the knowledge, like Amos to Isaiah.

6. The one who accompanies his knowledge with the doing, and the doing with the knowledge he is chair and footstool to the feet of God. Chair for knowledge, footstool for doing<sup>338</sup>.

7. The camp of the Assyrians' king it is the gathering of the evil thoughts. "Powerful" is in is the one who moves the natural desires towards pleasure. "Warrior" is the one who stirs up the anger towards guarding the pleasures. "Chieftain", the one who stirs up the senses through the countenances of the seen things, and the "army's leader" is the one who gives image to the passions and contrives the means and the modes of doing them.

8. Without a sensitive thing the passion isn't produced. Because if there is no woman, there neither is fornication; if

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<sup>337</sup> I Corinthians: 15: 49: "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."; ROB: "And as we have borne the image of the earthly one, let also bear the image of the heavenly one".

<sup>338</sup> So, the two stairs (the practice and the gnosis) don't exclude each other, but the stair of the knowledge it preserves the virtue doing.

there isn't any food, there is no gluttony either; and if there isn't any gold, there neither is the passion of love of money. Therefore any passionate movement of our natural powers is mastered by a sensitive thing, or by a devil, which stirs up the soul, through that thing, towards sin.

9. The “crushing” stops the work; the “destruction” abolishes even the thought of the evil.

10. As the northern part of the earth doesn't enjoy the sun, in the same manner the evil habit, in which lives the devil, it doesn't receive the knowledge's light.

### **Question no. 51**

*And many were bringing gifts to God in Jerusalem and presents to Hezekiah, the king of Judaea. And he has been elevated in the eyes of all nations”. What the “gifts” are and what are the “presents”? And what does it mean “He has been elevated in the eyes of all nations”?*

### **Answer**

God, by creating the whole seen nature, He hasn't left it to move only through feeling, but He has sown wisely in each of the species which compose it wisdom's spiritual rationalities and modes of decent behavior (1). And He has done this for not only through the silent creatures to be heralded with a loud voice their Maker, show through the rationalities of the things, but also the man, advised by the natural laws and modes of the seen ones, to easily find the teaching's way which leads towards Him (2). For it was proper to the supreme kindness to make not only out of the godlike and bodiless beings of the spiritual ones, images of the mysterious and godlike glory, like ones who receive, as much as it is allowed to them, analogue to themselves, that splendor from above understanding of the unreachable beauty, but to mix also in the sensitive things, which are so far away from the spiritual beings, traces of the

own greatness, to be able to transport through them the human mind in an undeceiving way towards God, by helping it to raise itself above all the seen ones and to leave behind itself all the ones being in the middle, through which it has cut to itself this road (3).

And not only for this, but also for not having anyone of the ones who serve the creature instead of the Maker, the possibility of excusing his nescience, once he hears the creature heralding, more strongly than any voice, its Maker.

But if the Maker of the seen ones has sown into nature in a natural way spiritual rationalities of the wisdom and modes of decent behavior, then it follows that any mind crowned as it is due, with virtue and cognizance, reigning, like Hezekiah, over Jerusalem, namely over a habit which doesn't see but the peace, or over a state lacked of any passions (for Jerusalem it is interpreted as: "the sight of the peace"), it has the whole creation in its mastery through the forms which compose it. And the creation brings to God, through the mediation of the mind, the spiritual rationalities of the cognizance, as some "gifts", and to the mind itself it offers, like some "presents", the modes of the virtues according to the natural law, which exists in it. And through both of them it leads the mind on the right path, which can gain through them a great brightness, namely the loving of wisdom mind, which becomes consummated through rationality and life or through deeds and contemplation (6). The Scripture aprioristically says that to the Lord are being brought "gifts", and to the king "presents". For, as the ones who have strived themselves with these things, "gifts" are called, according to their exact meaning, the things which are being brought to the ones who don't need those things, and "presents" are called, the things given to the ones who need them. From here it comes also the common custom of the people to call the things which they bring to the king as "gifts". This custom could have in sight the fact that the ones who receive these gifts aren't lacked of them.

Also someone from the ones who are zealous in everything, he could say that also due to this reason were called “gifts” the things brought by the Magi to the Lord, Who out from His love for people made Himself alike us. Of course that by saying this he won’t change anything from the truth of the symbol.

Therefore by bringing to the Lord the spiritual rationalities from the things, we bring them as “gifts” for He by nature isn’t lacked of any of these ones. For we don’t bring to the Lord, along with other things, the rationalities of the things, because he would be lacked of them, but for praising Him somehow, according to our power, as ones who are indebted to this, out of His creatures. And “presents” receives the one who zealously occupies himself with the godlike philosophy, as one who needs by nature both the modes of the nature through virtue and its rationalities for cognizance.

But the “gifts” can be understood also in other way (6). If the “gift” it what it is given to the ones who didn’t bring anything before, we can say that the knowing mind (the gnostic one) receives like “gifts”, from the contemplation of the things, the rationalities which compose (sustain) the faith without any rational demonstration (7) and which are brought through it to the Lord. This is because for the faith nobody brings anything before (8). And this is because the mind looks in a natural way and without any craftsmanship at the own Maker, because he is heralded by the creation. For what could somebody bring of an equal value to the faith (9), to receive the faith in God like a debt and not like a “gift”. And like “presents” he receives (10) the natural laws of the things, by imitating them through his ways of living, namely bringing before achieving them the labors of the repentance<sup>339</sup>. Through this he strips firstly the old man

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<sup>339</sup> The cognizance of God through nature though it is an act of the rationality, it is not an act which is due exclusively to it, because not the rationality builds “the rationalities from the world”, on which it would climb after as on a scaffold to God. But those rationalities are placed within nature by God Himself, as a readymade meal on behalf of the human rationality, which hasn’t anything to do but to ascertain it. Not being built by rationality, through demonstration, the rationality accepts them somehow through faith. Thus the

and only then he goes out to reap the fruits of the righteousness, by gathering the diverse modes of the virtue, sown into creatures. Because he couldn't inappropriate these ones, if he wouldn't strip firstly the old man, forcing him to the limit through many toils and sweats, like the snake does when it molts.

Thus, the knowing mind (the gnostic one) receives as "gifts" for God the sustainer rationalities of the faith, gathered out from the things, not bringing and not giving anything before receiving them. For "who gave Him something before and it will be turned back to Him"<sup>340</sup> (11).

And he receives as "presents the natural laws of the things, by imitating them through his modes of living. For instance, the wise mind by imitating the natural law of the heavenly canopy, it receives as "present" the ability of maintaining itself always in the regular and constant movement of the virtue and of the cognizance, movement that bears with itself firmly the luminous all-shining rationalities of the things, just like some stars (12).

Or, by imitating the natural law of the sun which changes its places according to the needs of the Universe, it receives another "present" namely the good reckoning, through which it accommodates itself wisely and according to the decency to all the circumstances, remaining always the same through the undiminished identity of the light which it spreads through virtue and cognizance (13).

Likewise it receives from the vulture the power of looking directly at the godlike brightness of the pure light,

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contemplation of the rationalities from the world it is on one had an act of the rationality, and on the other hand, an act of faith, of the rationality's faith we would say. The creation brings them through the human mind to God, because only the man reports them consciously to God, as to their cause. If the rationalities are offered to the man by nature, or through God through nature as readymade, not the same thing can be said about the laws of the nature. For the man to inappropriate them, it is required a long effort. Only after that he truly has received them. The effect is sustained by the repentance or by the regret for the previous life, the one not according to the nature.

<sup>340</sup> Romans: 11: 35: KJB: "Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?": ROB: "Or who has given to Him before, and he will take back from Him?"

without being at all damaged the spiritual pupil by the all-shining ray (14).

Then it imitates the stag, crossing like some mountains the heights of the godlike sights and destroying through the discernment of the rationality the passions hidden into the nature of the things like some poisons: then, by gathering through the many and diverse springs of the cognizance, the venom of the evilness remained into memory with some occasion (15).

Not the less it imitates the nibble walk of the goat and the surety of the bird, skipping like a goat over the traps of the devils which wage war against the virtue, and flying like a bird over the snares of the ghost which fight against the cognizance. (16)<sup>341</sup>.

Some people say that the lion's bones, crushing one to another, they issue sparks. So also this one is imitated by the mind which occupies itself by nature with the knowing and with the serving of God, because it searches for the truth through debates, crushing into each-other the pious thoughts, like some bones and lighting thus the fire of the cognizance (17).

It becomes after, wiser than the snake and gentle like the dove, because it preserves in any circumstance the un-crushed faith, like a head, and rejects in any circumstance the wrath of the anger like a dove, by not knowing to bear evil thought to the ones who trouble it and mock it (18).

And even receives also from the dove as "present", the zeal of imitating its righteousness, doing by will everything that is done by the speechless animals from necessity (19).

Thus, the wisdom loving mind, contemplating into cognizance the world of the creatures according to the animal reason or natural way of life of each one, if occupies itself with the knowledge, (if it is gnostic), it receives the spiritual rationalities of the things, as some "gifts" brought to God by

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<sup>341</sup> To be observed the permanent parallelism of the two stages of the spiritual life: of the virtue and of the cognizance.

creation, and if it occupies itself with the doing (which is practical), by imitating through its modes of living the natural laws of the things, it receives the “presents”, unveiling into itself, through the live which it lives it, the whole greatness of the godlike wisdom borne in an unseen manner by the creatures (20).

Somebody could sustain that the Scripture said that to God are brought “gifts”, for the Scripture wanted to show the limitless of the godlike kindness, for God receives from us as “gifts” what He has given to us before, as He wouldn’t have given to us anything before, and reckoning like coming from us everything that we are bringing to Him. Of course also this one would be right by saying so, for he shows how great and unspoken is the kindness of God towards us, by accepting what is His as coming from us and confessing His need for them, as of some foreign things (21).

“And Hezekiah raised himself in the eyes of all nations”. The one who has reached through deeds and contemplation, like Hezekiah, on the highest peak of the virtue and of the cognizance, he has rightly raised higher than all nations, namely he has raised himself through doing above bodily and dishonest and of the so-called natural bodies passions (22); and simply speaking, to show you shortly, above all the ones which fall under the senses, penetrating through contemplation and cognizance (in a gnostic way) all the rationalities from within them. This is because also these ones are figuratively called in the Scripture “nations”, being through their nature of another nation in report with the soul and with the mind. God did not order, at all, to be waged war against them (23). For it hasn’t been ordered to us to fight against the creatures from outside, from outside the senses, but to ceaselessly fight the reproachable passions which live inside us, namely in the land of the heart, against nature. These ones must be fought until we will blot them out from this land, and we will end to be the sole masters over this land, which will be from now on untroubled, once have been destroyed the foreign passions (24).

That's why the Scripture by speaking about the "gifts" which were being brought to God and about the "presents" which were being brought to the king, didn't say simply: "Everybody was bringing gifts to God and presents to the king", but "many", namely not all the nations, but many nations. Through this it is being shown that there are so-called nations, from which nothing is brought to God or to the King. For rightly it is said that only the creatures which compose the world of the created ones are bringing on one hand as "gifts" to God the godlike rationalities from within them, according to which they have also been created, as ones which have been made by God, and on the other hand like "presents" to the king, their natural laws, like ones which have been created for the man, for the mind of the man, orienting itself after them, to settle down the sustainer of virtue modes. But the passions from within us, namely the "nations" with a liar existence, which haven't been created by God, they don't bring anything to God, because they haven't been created by Him. For the reproachable passions take their origin from us, who have transgressed the commandment of God, and not from God. Therefore no one from them brings anything to God, not having any reason of the wisdom or of the cognizance, as ones which exist in a fraudulently, by rejecting the wisdom and the knowledge<sup>342</sup>.

So, through the words: "And he was raised in the eyes of all the nations" the Scripture shows that the ones who has been found worthy, through the toils with the deed, to inhabit into dispassion, like in Jerusalem, and he has liberated himself from all the troubling of the sin, so that he is not working anymore, he is not speaking anymore, he is not listening and he is not thinking but to what is proper to the peace, after he

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<sup>342</sup> Everything that is made by God it has a rationality and a legitimacy into existence, contributing to the Universe's harmony. Only the passions have no reason, and therefore no legitimacy, and they produce troubling in the relations among creatures. Therefore unjustly the sin claims a reason, and even with so much exclusivity! The sin claims a reason by fraud, as it exists by fraud. It is seen from there that the passion drives a creature to destruction. There cannot be conceived a true and eternal consolidation of the existence through passion. But also unjustly it is reckoned that the virtue, the faith and the mystical living in God are lacked of rationality.

has received into the soul, through the contemplation of the nature, the world of the seen ones<sup>343</sup>, which it brings through him the rationalities from itself, as some “gifts”, to the Lord, and the laws from within it, it brings them to him like “presents”, like to a king has raised into the eyes of all the nations, as one who has raised himself through doing above all the bodily passions, and through contemplation above the natural bodies and above all the species which fall under the senses, once he has crossed the spiritual rationalities and their modes of life. So have I understood the word that “many” were bringing gifts, but not “everybody”. Namely, there are bringing gifts to God the nations from outside of the creatures, but not the nations from inside us, or the passions. This is because all the creatures, which compose the world, praise and extol God with speechless voices. And their praising becomes ours. “From them I am learning to praise Him”, says the Great Gregory, the one with the name Theologian.

Therefore, the Holy Scripture by addressing, like it's been shown, to everybody who want to save themselves its unforced advice, it hasn't locked itself into the narrowness of one person. For everyone can become a Hezekiah, by imitating Hezekiah in ghost. Everyone can shout out through prayer towards God and can be listened and can receive an Angel, namely the rationality (the inspiration) of a higher wisdom and cognizance during the time of the cunning devils` rushing in, through which to destroy all the mighty one and all the warrior and the leader of the army, namely the passionate movements of the lust and of the anger, as also the addiction towards ten sensitive ones and the thought which, like a commander of an army, contrives the modes of committing the sin. And by doing so, everyone can reach at the state of peace, by deliverance from passions and can occupy himself with the contemplations of the things. And he receives through this one, towards the

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<sup>343</sup> Firstly he receives through the cleaned of passions contemplation, the images and their rationalities into himself, then he raises himself above them to God, to seeing Him above understanding; this happens by the as rich as possible cognizance of the world, and not by avoiding the world.

glory of God and towards his own thriving, as some “gifts”, the rationalities which compose the knowledge and like some “presents”, which are the modes which sustain the virtue. And this is because ones and other ones are brought to him by the whole creation. And after all of these he is raised in honor in the eyes of all the nations, namely he is raised through virtue above all the passions and above all the creatures through cognizance<sup>344</sup> and he guards through humbleness the grace of the salvation, for not happening to him what it follows to them into the Scripture.

### Scholia

1. He shows which the rationalities are and which the modes of the creation are.

2. For these three reasons God has sown within the seen nature spiritual rationalities and modes of decent behavior:

a) To announce the Creator of the creatures,

b) For the man advised by the nature's modes to easily find out the way of the righteousness which leads towards Him, and

c) For no one of the believers to have as excuse the nescience.

3. The ones which are in the middle between God and men are the sensitive things and the intelligible relations. The human mind when has come close to God elevated itself above

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<sup>344</sup> Through virtue the passions are overcome, through cognizance first there are known (through the natural contemplation), and then are overcome (through theology) the created things. The virtue unites the man from the things as ultimate values and through this it liberates him from passions. The one who seeks the things in themselves for the pleasure that he has from them, he works driven by the passion, or he is tied by them (*σχέσις*) relation, o.n.). Immediately that he searches through the things a goal above them, he has escaped from the passion and he has achieved the liberty of that “pure silver” - not burdened by passivity, or passion – that Blondel speaks of (L`Action, volume I, p. 235). But the virtues working conformable with the nature of the things, they have also the purpose of showing the rationalities of the things by developing the virtuality from them. Because the rationalities sown in the things' nature aren't some static entities, but dynamic factors (Blondel, cited work, p. 229).

them, not being enslaved anymore by the sensitive things through doing neither retained by the intelligible realities through contemplation.

4. The creatures becomes the accuser of the unbelievers, as one that through the rationalities from within itself heralds its Creator, and through the natural laws of each species advises the man towards virtue. The rationalities, are shown to us in the steadily preservation of each species and the laws in the identity of the natural activity of each species. Not taking heed to them with the power of our mind, we have ignored the cause of the things and has sunken ourselves in all kind of passions contrary to the nature.

5. The man by contemplating the spiritual rationalities of the seen things, he learns that there is One Creator of the shown ones, but he doesn't search how That One is like, because this can be understood by nobody. The seen creature helps us understanding that there is a Maker, but not how the Maker is. Thus the Scripture called "gifts" the seen rationalities, which herald His mastery over everything, and "presents" their natural laws, through which the man knowing how each species is like, he learns to not break the natural law through a stranger law.

6. Another meaning of the gifts.

7. We have received the faith in God as a gift, being a knowledge which moves itself unmediated around God and containing a science that cannot be proven. "For it is the hypostasis of the hoped ones"<sup>345</sup>, which aren't contained in the knowledge of some creature.

8. Nothing, he says, does have an equal value to the faith.

9. It is about the believer and spiritual man.

10. Before the virtue is being brought the faith, and before the knowledge the virtue. But before the virtue nothing is

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<sup>345</sup> Hebrews: 11: 1: KJB: "NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; ROB: "And the faith is the entrustment of the hoped ones, the proving of the unseen things".

being brought, because the beginning and the spring of all the goods from the men is the faith. Before this one we cannot bring anything<sup>346</sup>.

11. The knowing mind (gnostic) receives the rationalities of the things as together-confessing of the faith in God, and not as creator of the faith. Because the rationalities of the things aren't principle (beginning) of the faith, because in this case what is believed it would be limited. For if the principle of a thing can be embraced through knowledge and therefore proven, that also that thing itself can be embraced through the according to nature knowledge.

12. The law of the sky is to be moving constantly in a circle. From it receives the one who occupies himself with the knowledge (the gnostic), the steady movement into good by imitating through the identity of his virtue the uninterrupted movement of the vault of heaven.

13. The natural law of the sun is to produce through its movements the variety of the seasons. From it learns the one who occupies himself with the knowledge to accommodate himself to the different situations, but keeping through rationality the brightness of the virtue not-shadowed by any of the happenings which come upon him unexpectedly.

14. The natural law of the vulture is to receive the sunray directly in the eyeball. From it learns the one who occupies himself with the knowledge to willingly let his mind surrounded by the godlike light.

15. It shows what the one who occupies himself with the natural knowledge of the stags learns, if he takes heed to the nature of the created ones.

16. It shows what learns by imitation from the goat or from the bird the ones who cuts his way towards knowledge, if he preserves the virtue not-hunted by enemies.

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<sup>346</sup> The order of the three stairs: faith, virtue and knowledge we meet it also to Mark the Ascetic (About Baptism, The Romanian Philokalia, volume I).

17. It shows the good thing the philosopher in the godlike ones learns it, by achieving with the will and in a rational manner what belongs to the lion.

18. It shows what we can learn from the dove.

20. The one who transforms by imitation the creatures' laws into his own law is virtuous, filling up with rationality the movement of the ones which are lacked of rationality. And the one who transforms, also through imitation, his law in laws of the creatures, he is passionate, making irrational what it is rational.

21. Another explanation of the gifts, proving the godlike kindness.

22. He calls natural bodies all the ones which are submitted to creation and corruption.

23. It is a good observation that one according to we must not fight against nature, of which Creator is God, but against the movements and against the works which are contrary to the nature and disordered of the existential powers from within ourselves.

24. The working philosophy elevates the active one above the passions, and the contemplation elevates the one who cultivate the knowledge above the seen ones, lifting his mind towards the intelligible ones, related to it.

### **Question no. 52**

*But Hezekiah didn't reward, after the benefaction God did it to him, but he exalted himself in his heart. And anger has come over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. And Hezekiah became humble from the haughtiness of his heart and the ones who inhabited Jerusalem. And the anger of God didn't come anymore over them in the days of Hezekiah<sup>347</sup>. What the benefaction is and what are the other ones?*

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<sup>347</sup> II Chronicles: 32: 25-26: KJB: "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. // Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart,

## **Answer**

God destined many and diverse benefactions to Hezekiah, escaping him and delivering him in different moments from all the need and the tribulation. But he though didn't give to God the whole thanksgiving for salvation, as he should had, but he was touched by human defilement and attributed to himself part from the victories` merit. That's why, rightly it is said that Hezekiah didn't reward after the benefaction that God made to him. Because he didn't measure gratefully according the thanksgiving with the greatness of the victories received from God but he became haughty in his heart, not succeeding to escape from the illness of the self-appreciation, that almost naturally emerges out from virtue and knowledge.

"And anger came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem". The anger of God is, according to one of the meanings, the pain felt by the ones who are guided through rebuking (1). It accompanies the unwilling troubles which are sent upon us. Through this one, God often guides the mind that boasts itself with its virtue and wisdom, towards modesty and humbleness, giving to it the possibility to know itself and to confess its own weakness. For the mind by feeling its weakness, it rejects the vain imagination of the mind. That's why one can also say about Hezekiah, after the anger came upon him: "And Hezekiah humbled himself from the haughtiness of his heart and the ones who lived in Jerusalem. And the anger of God didn't come anymore upon them in the days of Hezekiah".

According to another meaning the anger of God is the interruption of the overflowing of the godlike gifts (2). This thing

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both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah"; II Chronicles (Paralipomena): 32: 25-26: ROB: "But Hezekiah wasn't grateful for the benefaction that was done to him, because he became haughty in his heart. And the anger of God fell over him and over Judah and over Jerusalem. // But immediately that Hezekiah humbled himself for the haughtiness of his heart and together with him also the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the anger f God didn't come upon them in the days of Hezekiah".

it happens with profit to any mind which becomes haughty in the goods given to it by God and praise itself as it would be some of its own feats. But we must find out and see what does it means the fact that not only over Hezekiah, who became haughty in his heart, came anger came, but also over Judah and over Jerusalem. This detail must convince those ones who insist with the whole toil only on the letter of the Scripture, that the lovers of God must have zeal with their whole power towards the spiritual understanding of the written ones, if the knowledge of the truth is more precious to them than anything. For, if we listen only to the letter, we will often speak injustice about the judgment of God. For instance in this case we will tell that he punishes together with the sinful ones, unjustly, also the one who didn't commit sin. But then how it will be true the word which says: "Won't die the father for the son and neither the son for the father, but each of them will die for his sin?"<sup>348</sup> Or how it will be found true the word said by David towards God: "For You reward to everyone according to his deeds"<sup>349</sup>?

"And he became haughty, he says, the heart of Hezekiah". But he didn't add: "and the heart of the inhabitants from Jerusalem and Judah". How then He punished together with the guilty one also the innocent ones? Behold something that I cannot understand according to the interpretation of those ones (3). For he says: ""And the heart of Hezekiah became haughty. And anger came over him and over Judah and Jerusalem". So about those ones the Scripture hasn't write that they became haughty. But then the ones who remain to the letter and put higher the word than the spiritual meaning, they cannot untie this difficulty. That's why doesn't remain to us but to use the spiritual meaning and then we'll find out without any tiredness the truth which is covered by the letter and which shines like a light to the ones who are truth lovers.

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<sup>348</sup> Deuteronomy: 16: 24; II Kings (II Samuel): 4, 6; Ezekiel: 18: 20.

<sup>349</sup> Psalms: 62: 12: KJB: "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work."; 61: 11: KJB: "(...) and Yours, Lord, is the mercy; that You will reward to everyone according to his deeds".

So every the knowing and the wisdom lover mind it has with itself also Judah and Jerusalem. Judah, in the spiritual sense, it means the living as the confession through deeds together with the thoughts which sustain it, on the measure which marks the mind in its climbing<sup>350</sup>. For Judah it is interpreted like confession. And Jerusalem, allegorically understood, it is the peaceful habituation with the truth and with the godlike views which compose the truth. Shortly speaking, Judah is held by the mind like working philosophy, and Jerusalem is held by the mind as secret initiation in contemplation. Therefore, when the wise mind through the godlike grace has rejected through the working and contemplative philosophy with the whole power which it has erected against the virtue and the knowledge, then it has achieved a complete victory upon the spirits of evilness, but this fact doesn't determine it to bring the due thanksgiving to God, the author of the victory, they become haughty in their heart, by reckoning themselves the cause of the entire feat, then for the reason that didn't reward to God, after the benefaction of which it was imparted, not only the mind endures the anger of the desertion which comes upon it, but also Judah and Jerusalem, namely the habituation of the activity and of the contemplation. Because immediately raises up, with the lenience of God, the reproachable passions against the moral activity and defile the conscience which was clean until now, and, the liar opinions mix themselves in the contemplation of the things and crook the conscience which was strait before (4).

For there is a rule and a law of the Providence laid in the creatures, according to which the ones who have shown themselves ungrateful for the received goods, are guided towards gratefulness through the opposite ones, having to make the experience of the contrary ones to know the godlike taking care which gifted the goods to them. And it has been

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<sup>350</sup> Every gnostic and philosopher mind, namely the one that cultivates the knowledge and the moral activity.

ordered like so, lest, being allowed by the Providence to keep unmoved our self-opinion for the good deeds, to roll down in the opposite disposition of the pride, by reckoning the virtue and the knowledge as natural victories of ours, and not as gifts achieved through grace. In this case we would be like those who use the good to do evil and the things through which it should be made within us even more unmoved the godlike knowledge, they would cause to us the disease of ignoring God (5).

Because the one who imagine that he has reached at the last end of the virtue, he won't ask about the cause from which the virtues spring out, but he will circumscribe the power of wishing them only to himself, damaging the condition of his own salvation, namely God. But the one who feels his natural poverty in what regards the virtues, he won't cease to run with hurry towards the One Who can replace their lack (6).

Rightly it comes therefore the punishment over the mind which becomes haughty in its cogitations. And this punishment consists in deserting it, or in the leniency which God gives it to be troubled by devils in its activity, namely in Judaea, and in its contemplation, namely in Jerusalem, to gain the conscience of its natural impotence and the conscience of the godlike power and grace, which defend it and give to it all the goods. Through this he will be humbled totally banishing from himself the stranger and against nature haughtiness. Consequently the other anger won't come upon it, the one of taking back the destined gifts, as has not come over Hezekiah, who immediately that didn't come over him anymore the first pride, or desertion, he became humble, and reached at the knowledge of the One Who gave the goods. For according to the words: "And anger came over him and over Judah and Jerusalem" it is said: "and the anger of the Lord didn't come anymore over him in the days of Hezekiah". Namely the other anger didn't come anymore, the one of taking back the gifts, for the first desertion taught him to be grateful. Because the one who didn't become wise through the first type of anger, or desertion, to come to humbleness, he has to endure surely the

other anger, which strips him off the working of the gifts and lacks him of the power which guarded him before. "I will break the vine's fence", says God about the ungrateful Jerusalem, "and there will be plunder; I will break down the wall and it will be trodden. And I will desert My vine and it won't be cut, neither plowed and I will command to the clouds to not bring rain anymore over it"<sup>351</sup>. The same thing is told allegorically that it was suffered also by Saul, the first king of Israel. That one, by receiving through anointment together with the kingly office also the gift of the prophecy, because he didn't guard this one, he receives as first anger the tormenting from the evil spirit (7). And because he didn't come in his senses, through this he achieved the other anger and ended his life, reaching for his recklessness, in front of death lacked of any piety. This sad trouble of his it is shown by the fact that he is first tormented by devils, and then he willingly employs demons through sorcery and brings them haggish cult like the unbelievers<sup>352</sup>.

Therefore if through Hezekiah we understand the loving of wisdom mind, through Judaea the activity, and through Jerusalem the contemplation, when we will take notice that the mind is suffering somehow, let's believe that in the same time with the mind suffers also its working and contemplative powers through the rationalities which sustain them. Because isn't possible to suffer the subject, without receiving also the ones comprised into the subject (8).

Therefore the spiritual meaning it harmonizes perfectly with the Scripture's word, than no gossiping is brought to the godlike judgments and no other commandment is overthrown (9). Because according to the spiritual meaning which we've given not only Hezekiah becomes haughty, namely the mind, but together with it becomes haughty also Judah and Jerusalem, namely the activity and the contemplation, as also these ones don't suffer taken in themselves, whilst they don't exist as proper hypostases. That's why doesn't come only over

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<sup>351</sup> Isaiah: 5: 1-6.

<sup>352</sup> I Samuel: 16, 14 and the followings; in ROB: I Kings: 16, 14 and the followings.

Hezekiah, namely over the mind, the anger, but also over Judah and Jerusalem. Because immediately that the mind is defiled in some regard, are stained together with it also the activity and the contemplation, even they aren't partakers to the guilt which brings the anger.

Let's therefore to apply also to us the meaning of the written ones. Because, though according to the history these things happened to Hezekiah as type, they have been written for us, towards spiritual advice. The ones written then are happening to us always in a spiritual manner, because the enemy power is always ready to battle against us. They have been written for, by absorbing us as much as we can the whole Scripture into the mind, to enlighten our mind with the godlike meanings, and to make the body to shine by the way of living conform to the godlike rationalities understood, transforming it in speaking tool (rational) of the virtue, through rejecting the innate affects (10).

This place f the Scripture refers therefore also to every man loving of God and virtuous, who wisely girdled himself (in a gnostic way) with power against devils, likewise Hezekiah. If to such a man, it would happen to him an attack from the evil spirits, which wage war with the mind in an unseen way, and him, by receiving through prayer an Angel sent by God, namely the rationality (inspiration) of a higher wisdom, he would scatter away and destroy the whole gang of the devil, but he then wouldn't reckon God like the cause of this victory and salvation, but he would attribute to himself the whole victory, it can be said that that man didn't reward to God after His gift, because he didn't weight the size of the thanksgiving with the size of the salvation and didn't measure exactly his love (disposition) with the benefaction. To the one who saved him, (for the rewarding consists in the corresponding love of the saved one towards the One Who saved him, love measured through deeds), but he became haughty in his heart, boasting himself with the gifts that he has received, as he wouldn't have received them. Such a man will have to endure, rightly, the

anger which comes upon him. Because God allows the devil to make war to him mentally, for on the plan of the activity to shake the modes of the virtue, and on the plans of the contemplation to trouble the limpid rationalities of the knowledge; in this way, by realizing the man his own weakness, he will recognize that God is the sole power which kills inside us the passions and he will become humble and he will repent himself and reject the inflated self-opinion. Through this one he will regain the mercy of God and he will turn the anger which comes after upon the ones who don't repent, of retracting the grace which defends the soul, letting deserted the ungrateful mind (11).

And through “the days of Hezekiah” (12), the Scripture has understood the diverse enlightenments which every right-believer and loving of God mind it receives, that mind which lean through contemplation upon the things to understand the wisdom heralded by all of them in a diverse way. Until the activity and the contemplation accompany these enlightenments (13), they won't suffer of a diminishing of the virtue and of the knowledge, the Sun of the Righteousness bringing into such a mind, through His sunrise, these days (14).

### Scholia

1. What the anger of God is?
2. How can be understood in another way the anger of God?
3. Of the ones who listen only to the letter.
4. The one who becomes haughty for his deeds is reached by the dishonor of the passions, and the one who boasts himself with the knowledge, the right judgment let them deviate from the true contemplation.
5. Through the rule and the law sown by God into creatures, he understands the Providence sustainer of the things. This one advises, after a right judgment, towards

gratefulness the ones who have shown themselves ungrateful for the abundance of the benefactions towards the One Who has destined those benefactions to them; and this is that he makes these benefactions rarer. This action often awakens those ones to senses through the opposite ones, by making them to recognize the One Who has destined the goods to them. Because the self-opinion for virtue and knowledge, if it is not rebuked through punishment, it gives birth to the illness of the pride, which produces a disposition enemy to God.

6. The one who has known the insufficiency of his virtue, he never stops from its road. Because if he would do like so, he will be deprived of its beginning and of its target, namely of God, by stopping the movement of the desire around himself. In this case he would imagine that he has reached at consummation, whilst he has fallen from the truly existent One, towards Whom tends all the movement of the one who strives himself.

7. Not feeling the damages suffered by the virtues it is a slippery way towards disbelief. Because the one who for the pleasures of the body accustomed himself to not listen to God anymore, he will deny even God Himself when the occasion will emerge, cherishing the life of the body more than God, after he has put the pleasures of this one above the will of God.

8. He calls subject the mind, as one capable of virtue and knowledge. And the ones comprised into the subject are the activity and the contemplation, which stay toward the mind in report of accidents. That's why they suffer together in all manner with the mind which suffers, having any movement of this one as beginning of their own changing.

9. Another commandment is that one, which orders that the son not to die for the father.

10. The innate affects of the body, when they are guided by the rationality, they are free from condemnation, but when they move without rationality, they attract the condemnation to themselves. Therefore the affects must be rejected, because

their movement, though innate, often is used against nature, not being guided by rationality<sup>353</sup>.

11. Saving anger is the lenience which God grants it to the devils to wage war through the passions to the mind which has become haughty. Its purpose is that the mind, suffering the ones of dishonor, after it boasted itself with the virtues, to know Who is the Giver of the virtues, or to see itself disrobed of the foreign goods, which it has reckoned that it has them from itself, without having them received.

12. What the days of King Hezekiah are, in which the anger doesn't come?

13. Judaea and Jerusalem are, in hidden meaning, the doing and the contemplation.

14. The Sun of the Righteousness is the Lord and God and Savior of all, Jesus Christ.

### **Question no. 53**

*Again he says about Hezekiah: "And they buried him on the height of the tombs of the sons of David. And glory and honor gave to him the whole Judah and the ones who live in Jerusalem"<sup>354</sup>. What the height of the tombs is and the other ones?*

### **Answer**

David, understood in a spiritual sense, it is our Lord Jesus Christ, the stone which despitefully was thrown away by the masons, namely by the priests and by the chieftains of the

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<sup>353</sup> The passion has as cause the irrational use of the affects.

<sup>354</sup> II Chronicles: 32: 33: KJB: "And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead."; II Chronicles (Paralipomena): 32: 33: ROB: "Then Hezekiah died with his parents and they buried him in the upper row of the tombs of the sons of David and the whole Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem made a great honor at his death. And in his place was made King Manasseh, his son".

Jews, and Who has reached at the head of the corner, namely of the Church<sup>355</sup>. For the angle is the Church, according to the scripture. For as the angle makes the union of two walls, which it unites in an indissoluble tie, so also the Church has become the union between two peoples, bringing together the ones from the Gentiles and the ones from Jews in a single teaching of faith and gathering them in a sole thought. And the stone from the head of this corner is Christ, the One Who is Head of the entire body<sup>356</sup>. Because the name of David, interpreted, it means “despising”. And this One is nothing but the Word and the Son of God, the One Who for me put on countenance of servant<sup>357</sup> and let himself rebuked by the people who didn't believe to the truth and to be despised by the full of sin people<sup>358</sup>. He is the good shepherd, Who put His soul for the sheep<sup>359</sup> and He killed the lion and the bear<sup>360</sup>, namely He has plucked out from the human nature the anger and the lust, which were tearing apart the shape of the godlike image which was inside us through rationality. He is the blushing young man, for the suffering of death, adorned with beautiful eyes<sup>361</sup>,

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<sup>355</sup> Psalm: 118: 22; Matthew: 21: 42.

<sup>356</sup> Colossians: 1: 18: KJB: “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”; ROB: “And He is the Head of the body, of the Church; He is the beginning, the First One born from dead, to be Him the first One into everything.”

<sup>357</sup> Philippians: 2: 7: KJB: “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”; ROB: “But he emptied Himself, taking a countenance of servant, making Himself like humans, and at the countenance being like man.”

<sup>358</sup> Psalm: 22: 7: KJB: “All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying.”; ROB: “All the ones who saw me they mocked me, spoke with the lips, shook their head, saying.”

<sup>359</sup> John: 10: 11: KJB: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”; ROB: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd puts his soul for his sheep.”

<sup>360</sup> I Samuel: 17: 36: KJB: “Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.”; I Kings: ROB: “And bears and lions your servant has killed; and with this uncircumcised Philistine it will happen the same thing as with those ones, for he blasphemeth like so the army of the living God. Should I go and hit him, to wash away the shame of Israel? For I wonder who this Philistine is?”

<sup>361</sup> I Samuel (I Kings): 16: 12; I Samuel (I Kings): 17: 4.

namely with the glory of the higher rationalities of the Providence and of the Judgment (for the eyes of the Word are the Judgment and the providence), through which, even when he suffers for us, He supervises everything. He is the killer of the spiritual and haughty Goliath, namely of the devil which is of five cubits tall<sup>362</sup>, due to the passion which works through our five senses (1); which stature of the devil raises as much as the work of our senses stretches passionately towards the sensitive ones. He is the true King of Israel and seeing of God, even if Saul, namely the old people according to the law becomes angry, tormented by envy due to the disbelief, for he cannot renounce to the passing glory. Persecuted by that one, David, my Emperor, takes the spear and the vessel of water of that one, namely from the old people the power of the virtue with the deed and the grace of the knowing contemplation (2), which he gives them back to the ones who come to him with faith, namely to the ones from the Jews which will inherit the salvation, by receiving the news of His Kingdom.

Also he cuts to that one the side of the vestment, whilst that one sits in the cave for eliminating the surplus of the stomach, namely he takes from the old people the high decency of the moral philosophy, or the height of the meanings from the coating of symbols and of the riddles of the law. He reckons that it is not appropriate and it is nor right that the people of Jews, namely of the earthly and loving of body people, which sits in this age, or in the letter of the law, as in a cave, closing the godlike promises of the incorruptible goods in the corruptness of the passing ones, to have the spiritual adornment of the commandments of the law, as a wing of the vestment which to bring it through abuse to the corruption (3)<sup>363</sup>.

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<sup>362</sup> I Samuel (I Kings): 16: 12; I Samuel (I Kings): 17: 4.

<sup>363</sup> I Samuel: 26: 12: KJB: "So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they get them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them."; I Kings: ROB: "And David took the spear and the water vessel from the Saul's bolster and they went into their ways and nobody saw them; because nobody awakened himself, for the Lord sent over

This one is the spiritual David, the true shepherd and Emperor, who overthrows the enemy powers. He is shepherd to the ones who still occupy themselves with the working philosophy and graze like a grass the natural contemplation; and Emperor to the ones who renewed the beauty of the image given to them, making it like the model, through the spiritual laws and rationalities, and now they unmediated stay with the mind before the great Emperor of the ages<sup>364</sup> and mirror the unapproachable beauty<sup>365</sup>, if we can say so (4).

So the sons of this David are all the Saints from ever, as ones who have been born from him in ghost. And the tombs of these sons are the memories of their life on earth according to God<sup>366</sup>. And the hill on which these tombs are placed is the height of the knowledge and of their love for God. There they burry the mind, by placing it in the deserved place of the happiness, also into Judah also the ones who live in Jerusalem, namely the modes of the activity and the rationalities of the knowledge comprised into the true contemplation (5). Like this it is, through, only the mind which has died, in a commendable sense, to all the things, and namely to the sensitive ones through the rejection of the work of the senses, and to the intelligible ones through ceasing the mental movement<sup>367</sup>.

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them a deep sleep and everybody was sleeping”.

<sup>364</sup> I Timothy: 1: 17: KJB: “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”; ROB: “And the Emperor of the ages, the incorruptible One, to the unseen One, to the only God to be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!”

<sup>365</sup> I Corinthians: 13: 12-15: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. // And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”; ROB: “For we see now like through a mirror, in riddle, and then, face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully, as I was also known. // And now remain these three ones: the faith, the hope and the love. And bigger from these three ones is the love”.

<sup>366</sup> In Greek language τά μνημεῖα (the monuments) it means the remembering monuments; τά μνημεῖα (the tombs) and αἱ μνῆμαι (the memories) are etymologically related.

<sup>367</sup> About the mystical death of the mind into God, namely about the ceasing of its natural movements, for being replaced by the uncreated godlike works, Saint Maximos has spoken also in the chapter 62 from the II Centuria the chapter About Love (The Romanian Philokalia, volume II, p. 139). In Ambigua (G.P. 91, 1113) he says that the soul has three kinds of movements: of the mind, which, by moving itself in an unknown way around God, no

So, Hezekiah, by meaning the power of God, namely the powerful mind in activity and the most-enlightened in knowledge, through his burial he have to understand the burial of the mind when this one dies, namely when it detaches itself willingly from all the created ones and raises itself to the uncreated ones (6). Its burial is done also by Judaea and the ones who live in Jerusalem, namely its virtuous activity and the true contemplation into knowledge<sup>368</sup>. And it takes place “on the height of the tombs of the sons of David”, namely it is elevated to the height of the memory of the Saints from ever. “And they have given to the mind glory and honor”: glory as to one which has reached through the spiritual knowledge above all the rationalities from things, and honor, as to one which has cleaned itself of all passions and has made the movement of the senses (of the feeling) not-submitted to the natural laws from things (7).

Or maybe somebody from the ones who are very zealous he would say that the glory is the supreme beauty of the image, and the honor is the exact imitation of this one; and that the first one is produced by the true contemplation of the spiritual rationalities, and the second one is produced by the scrupulous and sincere fulfilling of the commandments (8). These ones being held by the great Hezekiah, he was buried on the height of the tombs of the sons of David. If somebody would want to more limpidly show this thing, instead of the words: “They buried him at the height of the tombs of the sons of David”,

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creature knows Him, due to His transcendence; of the rationality which defined the unknown One only according to the cause, through the rationalities gathered from the world; and of the feeling, which from the icons seen outside gathers like some symbols the rationalities mentioned above. All these three movements must be surpassed. The one of the feeling by forgetting the sensitive icons and by preserving in mind only their rationalities; the ones of the rationality through unifying all the rationalities in a sole simple and undivided cogitation; and the one of the mind by the detaching from all the created ones and by resting it even of the natural work, gathering itself whole into God. Therefore the mystical death of the mind it means the surpassing even of its supra-rational, intuitive and undefined cogitation.

<sup>368</sup> The true contemplation from the stage of the gnosis (η κατά την γνώσιν αληθῆς θεωρία (the true theory, E. l. t.'s n.)). So also the gnosis must be rejected when the mind leaves its works.

then he would say: "They placed the memory of Hezekiah at the height of the memory of the Saint from ever".

Let's notice that it hasn't been said: "in the tombs of the sons of David, or on the height of the tombs of the sons of David". This is because both the rationality of the Lord according to the body, and the mode of His life are above any comparison to the creatures and namely not only to the people, but also to the Angels, being totally not-comprised, not to talk also about the unreached meaning of His infinite godhead (9). So it is a pleasant thing even to the most sensitive man at what it means greatness, to be buried in the tombs of the sons of David, or, what it is a supreme honor, on the height of the tombs of the sons of David. For the Scripture doesn't say about anybody to would have been buried in the tombs of David, and even lesser on the height of the tombs of David. This is because the life according to the body of the Lord and God and Savior of ours doesn't have, as I've said, in no sense and in no image, comparison. Because it is said: "His virtue covered the heavens", namely even the righteousness of the Lord as a man, shown through body, covered the Powers from above, through the overwhelming abundance of His righteousness, in all regards (10). This is because He wasn't a simple man, but also God Who embodied Himself, to renew through Him and in Him the obsolete nature of the people and to make it partaker to the godlike nature, namely to make it to reject the whole corruption, fickleness and alteration; because through these ones our nature became like the one of the beasts, than the rationality was overwhelmed by the work of the senses. Let the glory be His forever.

### Scholia

1. The devil is five cubits tall, he says, due to the senses. This is because without these ones the reckless movement of his evilness into our soul cannot increase the growth of the sin.

2. The “spear”, he says, symbolizes the power of the virtue, and the vessel of water indicates the mystery of the knowledge.

3. “Cave” he calls this world and the power of the law. And Saul is the Judaic people, of whose mind, turning from the godlike light of the spiritual ones, it settles itself down in the darkness of the tied ones and in the shadow of the letter, using the creation done by God and the law towards producing the corruption. This is because the one who limits the immortal promises only to the letter and to the countenances of the things, which fall under the senses, he surrenders them to the corruption, as a meal which he transforms in excrement, showing at the end, the beginning of his opinion about God<sup>369</sup>. The “vestment” is the envelope of riddles of the law, and its “wing” the sublimity of the meanings uncovered through the spiritual contemplation. This sublimity is cut off from the ones who interpret the Holy Scripture only according to the senses.

4. The Lord is called the shepherd of the ones who are guided through the natural contemplation towards the stable from above and Emperor to the ones who obey the law of the ghost and stay close to the throne of the grace of God, through the simple contact of the mind, on the ground of the undivided knowledge.

5. The ones who live in Judaea are the modes of virtuous activity, and the ones who live in Jerusalem are the rationalities of the knowledge which are comprised in contemplation.

6. The worthy to be praised death of mind, it is its willingly detaching from all things. After this the mind receives the godlike life through grace, gaining instead of things, in a not-understood way, the Maker of the things.

7. “Glory” he calls the knowledge identified and unlimited by any rationality, and “honor” the unrestrained movement of the will into the virtue, according to the nature.

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<sup>369</sup> Showing out of this final result, the character of his initial conception about God.

8. The knowledge which doesn't forget anything is a movement, being an indefinite and above understanding movement of the mind around the godlike infinity, it imagines, through its "indefinite", the supra-infinite "glory" of the truth. And the voluntary imitation of the wise goodness of the Providence, it receives as "honor" the proven likeness of the mind to God, imprinted in its inward disposition.

9. Listen to it, Nilus, you who are crawling yourself on the ground, and be you silent.

10. According to the higher meaning, David is Christ, and the His tomb is the memory of His righteousness, which doesn't have likeness in the entire rational nature. This is because the Word of God making Himself a man, He didn't measure His righteousness according to the natural laws of the body, but He worked through the body the natural righteousness which is in Him like in God, not being lacked by the natural work<sup>370</sup>.

#### **Question no. 54**

*In the first book of Ezra it has been written about Zerubbabel: "And when the young man went out raising his face to the sky, towards Jerusalem, he blessed the Emperor of Heavens, saying: From You is the victory, from You is the wisdom and Your is the glory. And I am Your servant. Blessed are You, the One Who has given to me wisdom and to You I confess myself to You, Lord of the parents"<sup>371</sup>. What does it mean: Raising hi face to the sky towards Jerusalem" and the others?*

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<sup>370</sup> He worked the natural righteousness of God which is in Him; because this one wasn't reduced to a static presence, potential after embodiment, in the sense of the modern theories about kenosis (for instance S. Bulgakov) but it had the corresponding work, through which it was manifesting itself.

<sup>371</sup> III Ezra: 4: 58-60.

## Answer

Zerubbabel, according to the exact rule of the Hebrew language, it is pronounced either harshly, or smoothly, in all cases: when it is a composed word, when it is a combination of two separate words, and when it is a sole elementary word. When is pronounced harshly, this word it means ‘the seed of trouble’<sup>372</sup>, and when it is pronounced smoothly, it means the “dawn of the trouble”. When it is a composed word it means: “dawn into trouble”, and when it is formed by two separate words it means “the dawn from scattering”. Finally, when it is a unique word it means “the resting itself” (1).

Zerubbabel is, therefore, the loving of philosophy mind (philosopher). For the first time it is sown, according to righteousness and repentance, into the “trouble” caused by the slavery to the passions: secondly it follows “the dawn of the trouble”, namely the mind unveils “the shame” caused to it by the “trouble” from the passions: thirdly it comes the “dawn into trouble”, namely the mind through knowledge it brings light in the confuse work of the senses which are directed towards the sensitive ones and those ones anymore to come close to the sensitive things without rationality<sup>373</sup>. Fourthly, it comes the “dawn from scattering”, namely the mind offers to the powers of the soul, which are scattered around the sensitive things, the dawn of the deeds of the righteousness which gives birth to the rational activity, for this one it is not lacked anymore of the

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<sup>372</sup> The trouble as state of confusion and passionate disorder exists before any descending of the mind as critic spirit into it. But, as a fact of conscience, it is unveiled only through this awakening and penetration of the mind into it, on the basis of the repentance. That's why one can say about this first descent of the mind into it that it is seed thrown into “trouble”, or “seed of the trouble”, namely having to show to the conscience this trouble or confusion. It is not less true that the shown objective trouble or confusion it is another kind of trouble than the one which exists as an objective fact. It is already a “shame”, a “trouble” which carries into itself the germ of the repentance. This showing of the objective trouble and therefore its transformation in subjective trouble, it happens in the second phase, in the “dawn of the trouble”.

<sup>373</sup> Both the trouble as passionate state and the trouble as shame for the sins are scattered in this third phase, when the mind through the light of its knowledge becomes master within the soul and scatters the domination of the passions.

knowledge through contemplation, which brings back the scattered powers towards the spiritual realities; in the fifth place, the mind becomes “itself rest”, after it has reconciled all and it has united the activity with the good through nature, and the contemplation with the truth through nature<sup>374</sup>.

For the whole activity it is done for the good and the whole contemplation seeks the knowledge only for the truth (2). After one has reaches at them, there won't be anything which to arouse the activity of the soul, or to attract the contemplation of the soul through stranger views. For the soul has reached beyond everything that exists and is thought, and the soul has put up on itself God Himself, Who is sole good and true and is above all being and understanding.

The mind, become thus through the diverse advancements into virtue, it comes out, after its victory, from Emperor Darius, namely from the natural law<sup>375</sup>, after it has shown to that one the power of the love and of the truth, through comparing the virtue to the passions (3) and it has taken from that one letters which to straighten its impulse and to stop the one of the enemies. And after it comes out, by knowing from where the grace of the victory has come, “it raises its face towards heavens, towards Jerusalem and blesses the Emperor of the Heavens”.

“The face” of such a mind it is the hidden disposition of the soul, in which there are all the characteristics of the virtues. This one is raised by the mind “towards heavens”, namely towards the height of the contemplation, “towards Jerusalem”, namely towards the habit of the dispassion (4).

Or maybe through the words “towards heavens, towards Jerusalem” it is shown that the mind it seeks its dwelling place

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<sup>374</sup> If in the third phase the mind lets the powers of the soul to direct themselves not-passionately towards the sensitive things, in the fourth phase it sends them towards intelligible realities, and in the fifth one it rests itself also of this activity, gathering itself into God.

<sup>375</sup> The law (*vόμος*) being in the Greek language of masculine genre, Emperor Darius can be easily understood as the law which masters over nature.

from heaven<sup>376</sup> and towards the city of the ones who are enlisted in heavens<sup>377</sup> (5), about whom “extolled things have been spoken”<sup>378</sup>, as David says.

For he couldn't bless God without raising his face or the disposition of the soul, composed, as some features, from many and diverse virtues, towards the height of the contemplation and of the knowledge, through the habit of the dispassion, namely of the peaceful and innocent state (6)<sup>379</sup>.

And what does he say, raising his face? “From You is the victory”. Through “victory” he shows the end of the doing against passions, as a reward of the godlike striving against the sin. “And from You is the wisdom”. Through “wisdom” he indicates the end to which one reaches through contemplation, the end which removes, through knowledge, the whole science of the soul. “And Your is the glory”. “The glory” he calls the shininess of the godlike beauty, which irradiates out of those ones and consists in the union of the victory with the knowledge, of the kindness and of the truth. For these ones, being united together, irradiate a sole glory and the one of

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<sup>376</sup> II Corinthians: 5: 1-2: KJB: “FOR we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. // For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:”; ROB: “For we know that, if this tent, our earthly dwelling place, it will broke, we have a building from God, not made by hands home, eternal, in heavens. // Because that's why we also sigh, in this body, desiring to reconcile ourselves with the dwelling place from heavens.”.

<sup>377</sup> Hebrews: 12: 23: KJB: “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,”; ROB: “And of the church of the first born ones, which are written in heavens also by God, the Judge of everybody, and to the ghosts of the consummated righteous ones,”

<sup>378</sup> Psalms: 87: 3: KJB: “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.”; 86: 2: ROB: “Glorified things have been spoken about you, the city of God”.

<sup>379</sup> This disposition, as face of the soul, is not a momentary state, but a permanent image of the soul, achieved by the man through many habits. Even though it is hidden into the soul, it reflects also on the external face. When the face from within is a synthesis of all the virtues, it is not anymore an ugly face, but a beautiful face, which represents in the same time the state of dispassion. For the state of dispassion consisting of the absence of any passion, it is the same thing with the presence of all virtues, once any passion is banishes away through the corresponding virtue.

God<sup>380</sup> (7). That's why he also adds in a very appropriate manner: "And I am Your servant", knowing that the whole activity and contemplation, virtue and knowledge, victory and wisdom, kindness and truth, are done within us, like in some organs, by God, we bringing no more than the disposition which wants the good things (8). This disposition is had also by the great Zerubbabel. That's why he adds, saying towards God: "Blessed are You, the One Who has given me wisdom and to You I confess myself, Lord of the fathers". As a grateful servant, Zerubbabel attributed everything to God, Who gave everything. From Him Zerubbabel received the wisdom, through which he can confess to Him, as to a Lord of the fathers, the power of the received goods. Therefore he says: "Blessed are You Lord", showing through this that God has the infinite wisdom, or, better said, He is the wisdom itself, from Who Zerubbabel also receiving wisdom, he confesses to Him the received wisdom.

And he calls Him "Lord of the fathers", to show that the feasts of the Saints were proven gifts from God and no one of the Saints wanted anything, but only the good which was given to him from the Lord God, on the measure of the gratefulness and of the benevolence of the one who received that good thing; in other words, each one of them achieved only those goods, which he attributed to the Lord, Who gave them (9).

So he calls "father" the Saints from ever. For by receiving him their faith and imitating their life, he has succeeded through will to born himself from those ones with the ghost, as son born through his free will from the fathers who also have this quality through their free will. This quality is the more valued by God than the quality of the ones who become parents and sons through body and not through will, as is the more discerned through the superiority of the being of the soul from the body (10).

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<sup>380</sup> The most satisfying definition of the godlike glory. It is not a feature or a singular work of God, in row with the other works, but the total brightness which irradiates out from the ensemble of all the divine features and works.

This Zerubbabel is the one of the young men who stay about King Darius<sup>381</sup>, namely about the natural law, and comprises the whole stretch of the godlike goods form people in two words. He scatters the daring of the other ones and attracts to himself the law which scatters them over the nature, and this one decrees the liberation of the powers of the soul kept into the foreign slavery of the passions.

The evil ghosts, which defend the body as more earthly, are two, through the twofold of the number being indicated this passionate and perishable character of the body (11). And the mind which defends the soul, which is simple according to the being, it is one, being the expression of the righteous unity of the soul, and the soul cannot be touched by death at all, because doesn't admit some cutting which to be divided (the soul).

So, one of the young men says, namely the first one, by presenting the passionate vitality of the body: "The strongest one is the wine"<sup>382</sup>. He calls "wine" the whole stretching of the loving of pleasure passions, which he circumscribes in this sole word. This "wine" causes the "drunkenness" which drives the man out of his minds and perverts the use of the natural thoughts. For the Scripture says: "The anger of the devils is their wine and the anger of the asps without healing"<sup>383</sup>. The Scripture calls the boiling of the bodily pleasures "the wine of the devils" and the haughty and despising disobedience "the wine of the asps". Because it is said something about this beast, that unlike all the other beasts of the earth, it closes its own ears from singings despising proudly the ones who sing.

Another from the young men, namely the second one, says: "The strongest one is the emperor"<sup>384</sup>. He calls "king" the

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<sup>381</sup> III Ezra: 4: 13: ROB (this book is included only in the Romanian Orthodox Bible and not in the King James Bible): "And the third one who spoke about women and truth, is Zerubbabel. He started speaking."

<sup>382</sup> III Ezra: 3: 10: ROB: "One wrote: stronger is the wine".

<sup>383</sup> Deuteronomy: 32: 33: KJB: "Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."; ROB: "Their wine is scorpion venom and killing poison of asp".

<sup>384</sup> III Ezra: 3: 11: ROB: "The other one wrote: stronger is the king".

whole vain glory of the richness, of the mastery and of the other shininess from outside. It is the glory which gives birth to the nescience, through it is produced the tearing apart of the nature, because everybody ignores to each other and all of them tear apart among themselves for only one thing: because each one wants to be glorified more than others, either due to the power, or to the richness, or to the pleasure, or for other reasons for which want to be glorified the ones who don't know the godlike glory the one which remains and consequently they despise its power.

These ones reducing the whole depth of mud of the passions contrary to the nature to these two springs, they made Darius judge of the words, hoping that the law which dominates over the nature will consent to their opinions.

But the third one, which is the mind that defends the virtue and the conscience and strives to liberate the soul from the evil slavery of the passions, says:

"Stronger are the women and all of them are defeated by the truth"<sup>385</sup>. "Women" he called the deifying virtues, from which is born the love into people, which unites them with God and with each other. This one kidnaps the soul<sup>386</sup> of everybody, of the ones submitted to the birth and to the corruption, as also of the spiritual beings which are above birth and corruption, and interweaves their souls with God Himself in a loving union<sup>387</sup>, as much as it is possible to the human nature, accomplishing in a unique way the godlike and righteous marriage. And "truth" he called the unique and sole cause of

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<sup>385</sup> III Ezra: 3: 12: KJB: "And the third one had written: stronger are the women and more than all, the truth overcomes".

<sup>386</sup> The soul being in the Greek language of feminine gender, it is reckoned like a virgin who gives herself in marriage to God in a mysterious wedding.

<sup>387</sup> κατ ἐρωτικήν τινασύγκρασιν = in a loving admixture (in a romantic confrontation, E. l. t.'s n.). The Holy Fathers use the term ἐνώση both for the union of the soul with God and for the one of the human nature with the godlike nature into Christ. This "admixture" though, is not the same with the "merger" σύγχυσις, which it is forbidden by the Chalcedon council. The admixture is the interpenetration of two substances without losing their identity (for instance of the soul with the body). It would be better for the Romanian theology to inappropriate this term, for defining the union as reciprocal soaking of substances and energies which preserve their identity, for not reckoning it as a simple sticking together.

the things, the beginning, the mastery, the power and the glory, from which and for which have been made and are made all things and through which and for which are sustained all things in existence, and for the sake of which h is done all the striving of the loving of God ones. Shortly speaking, through "women" he showed the end of the virtues: the love. And this is the pleasure of the undivided and uninterrupted union of the ones whom is imparted the good through the nature. And through "truth" he indicated the end of all knowledge and even of all the ones which can be known, end towards which they are attracted, as towards the beginning and the end of all things and natural movements, through some general rationality (12). This is because the beginning and the end of all things, as truth, overcomes all through nature and attracts towards itself the movement of all beings.

The loving of wisdom mind (the philosopher one) speaking thus to the law of the nature, banishes from it the whole deceiving of the cunning devils and convinces it to decree the liberation of the thoughts and of the powers of the soul, kept into the slavery of the passions, and to herald to the ones locked into darkness, namely into the lust for the sensitive ones, the unchaining from the spiritual slavery. Through this it let them to go up to Judaea, namely into virtue, to build in Jerusalem, namely in the habit of the dispassion, the temple of the Lord, or the knowledge capable to receive the wisdom<sup>388</sup> (13).

Therefore, wise and most-wise is the great Zerubbabel. This is because by receiving the wisdom from God, he could,

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<sup>388</sup> From virtue (Judaea) one advances towards dispassion or towards the totality of the virtues (Jerusalem), and from this one to knowledge (temple). And the knowledge (the gnosis), as result of the human contemplative striving, helped, of course, by the grace, it receives from above, as a coronation, the wisdom. The idea that the temple, as peak of human endeavor into virtue and knowledge, it receives the divine Wisdom as grace, it has received its expression into the great church of Justinian, dedicated to the godlike Sophia, as collective mind, as one that has been destined to be filled up by the godlike wisdom. The cleaned and gnostic mind, as subjective temple, and the sanctified church, as collective mind of the faithful congregation, as mind of the cosmos, are the vessels destined to be filled up by the Sophia of the creature in the process of deification.

due to this wisdom, to combat, to defeat and to overthrow the answers given by the evil ghosts, which, defending the body, they were trying to bring to delusion and corruption the human kind. Through the two answers of his, he totally blown away the both enemy answers and liberated the soul from the evil slavery of the passions. Being given the fact that through the praising of the wine those answers strived to obtain the greatest honor for the boiling of the bodily pleasures, and through praising the emperor they elevated above all the pleasure of the worldly glory, this one showed, through the symbol of the women, the superiority of the spiritual pleasure, which has not end, and through the truth indicated the power that cannot be moved by anything. Through this one he convinced Darius to despise the present goods and to search for the future ones.

This is the healthy and wise meaning, according to my opinion, of the answers of the three young men. It was reckoned by the Ghost worthy of being preserved in writing for our advising. And if somebody could see a higher meaning of the written ones, according to the power given to him for seeing the godlike ones, he mustn't be envy. This is because the grace of the Ghost doesn't decrease into the ones who are imparted by Him (due to which reason also the passion of the envy is born), even if one receives more, and another less, from the grace. This is because each ones receives according to the measure of his own faith the showing of the work of the Ghost. So that everyone is his own distributor of the grace (14). And if he would cogitate better, he shouldn't envy the one who has achieved greater graces, because it hangs on to himself the disposition through which he receives the godlike goods.

But let's come also to another secret meaning of the written ones, namely to the one which unveils their original truth, the true and new Zerubbabel (15), heralded figuratively through the old one, namely to our Lord and God Jesus Christ, Who was conceived, bore and born in the "confusion"<sup>389</sup> of our

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<sup>389</sup> The "confusion" represents Babylon where Zerubbabel was born and from where he liberated the Jews. Babel enters also in the composition of the name: Zerub-Babel.

nature, for making Himself man according to the nature, t[p bring back to Himself the nature, bringing it out from confusion.

This One wasn't brought into slavery with us and wasn't moved into the confusion of the passions (16). "For He didn't commit sin, neither was cunningness into his mouth"<sup>390</sup>. But He was born like a servant among us the enslaved ones, and "He was reckoned with us, the lawless ones"<sup>391</sup>, making Himself out of the love for people "into the resemblance of the body of the sin, for the sin"<sup>392</sup>. He made Himself "into the resemblance of the body of the sin", because, being God without passion by nature, He deigned to make Himself, according to the oikonomia, in unchanged way, man by nature with passions (17). And so He made Himself "for sin", because "due to our sins He was brought to death and for us He suffered pains"; "for our sins He was crushed, for us to be healed with His wound"<sup>393</sup>. The ghost before our face, the

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<sup>390</sup> Isaiah: 53: 9: KJB: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."; ROB: "His tomb was placed next to the lawless ones and with the doers of evil deeds, after His death, though He didn't commit any injustice and neither deceitfulness was in His mouth".

<sup>391</sup> Isaiah: 53: 12: KJB: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."; ROB: "For this I will give His part among the great ones and with the mighty one He will share the prey, as reward for He gave His soul towards death and with the doers of the evil He was counted. For He bore the lawlessness of many and for the sinful ones He gave His life".

<sup>392</sup> Romans: 8: 3: KJB: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:”; ROB: "For what it was impossible to the Law – being weak through the body – was done by God, by sending His Son into the resemblance of the body of the sin and for the sin to condemn the sin into the body.”

<sup>393</sup> Isaiah: 53: 4-5: KJB: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. // But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."; ROB: "But he took upon Himself our pains and with our sufferance He burdened Himself. And we reckoned Him punished, beaten and tormented by God, // But He was pierced for our sins and crushed for our lawlessness. He was punished for our salvation and for His wounds we all have been healed."

anointed of God was caught in our corruption, He about Whom we say: "in His shadow we will live among nations"<sup>394</sup>.

He is the righteous Sunrise from our scattering, in which we have ended through sin. About Him the Holy Ghost says through the Prophet: "For righteous Sunrise will rise to you"<sup>395</sup> or "Behold man, Sunrise is His name and beneath Him it will rise"<sup>396</sup>, or "The Sun of the righteousness will rise, bringing healing in His wings"<sup>397</sup>. Through the word "beneath Him" it is shown the not understood mystery of the embodiment of the Word, from Whom rose up the salvation of everybody (18). And "the wings of the Sun of the Righteousness" would be the two Testaments, through which flying the Word into us, he heals us of the wound of falling into the sin and gives to us the consummated health of the virtue, namely through the Old one removes the sin, and through the New one plants the virtue; or again, the wings and the Providence and the Judgment. The Word flying by these ones, He dwells in an unseen way into creatures, healing through the rationalities of the wisdom the ones who want to be made whole again and

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<sup>394</sup> Jeremiah: 23: 5: KJB: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."; ROB: "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise to David righteous Branch and He will reach to be King and He will reign with wisdom; there will be done judgment and justice on earth."

<sup>395</sup> Lamentation (of Jeremiah): 4: 40: KJB: "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen."; ROB: "The breath of our life, the Anointed of the Lord, was trapped in their pit – that One about Whom we were saying: "Under His shadow we will live among peoples".

<sup>396</sup> Zachariah: 6: 12: KJB: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord"; ROB: "And you will tell Him in this way: "Behold a man Who will be called Branch; this One will bud and will build the temple of the Lord."

<sup>397</sup> Malachi: 3: 20 (4, 2, Septuagint): 4: 2: KJB: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."; 3: 20: ROB: "And will rise up for you, the ones who fear My Name, the Son of the righteousness, with healing coming into His rays and you will go out and romp around like calves for fattening."

healing through the modes of the rebuking the hard to be moved towards virtue ones. Through this to some ones He cleans the defilement of the body, and to others He wipes away the stains of the soul<sup>398</sup> (19).

He is the One Who brings back the true Israel from slavery. He doesn't move Israel from a country to another, like the old Zerubbabel did, moving the people from Babylon to Judaea, but from earth to heavens, from sin to virtue, from nescience to the cognizance, from corruption to incorruptibility and from death to immortality, shortly speaking, from the seen and perishable world, to the spiritual and steady world, and from the life which disintegrates to the ones who lasts and doesn't shatter.

He is the true Builder of the rational temple, destroyed by sins and burnt by the foreign fire, which we have brought upon it by walking into the light of the fire from within us and in the flame in which are burnt, because we not only have made the mental part of the soul to slavishly follow the bodily thought, but we have also shamelessly have lit up the matter of the passions through our work (20).

He is the One Who convinced, through wisdom, the Emperor Darius, namely the law of the nature. For it is not possible that in this place to be understood through Darius the devil, once he made himself willingly together-worker with the grace in liberating the people and let himself convinced that nothing is stronger and more useful to the nature towards salvation, than the faith and the good conscience. For through truth it is understood the faith which it has within itself the rationality of the truth, and the good conscience is the sign of the love for God, allegorically indicated through women,

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<sup>398</sup> Through Providence God guides in a positive manner the man through the benefactions which He gives to him in every instant and through meditation upon them; through judgment He deviates the man from evil, by sending to him diverse tribulations. These two modes alternate or even interweave with each other, like in a parental pedagogy. In each day God gives to us His goods and almost each day He also rebukes us. He stays daily to judgment with us, to escape us from the unmerciful judgment from the end.

because where it is it there isn't possible the transgression of the godlike commandments (21).

He is the One Who rebuilt in Himself, through an unspoken union, "the tent of David"<sup>399</sup>, namely the nature broken through death due to the sin.

He is the Zerubbabel Who raised up with glory the fallen house of God, about which the Ghost was saying: "The last glory of this house will be above the first one"<sup>400</sup>.

For the Word entered in the second communion with the nature, which is the more enlightened than the first one, as for the first time He gave to it from what was the best, and later he imparted Himself from what was the worst. This is for also saving the image and to make immortal also the body. So, by totally erasing the word of the snake, blown into the ears of the nature, He has made again the nature clean as at the beginning. End He even made the nature to surpass through deifying its first creation. And as not existing at the beginning, he founded it, so being brought down latter; He made it unchangeable, for not falling down anymore (22). Through this He accomplished the whole advice of God and the Father, deifying it through embodiment<sup>401</sup>. "The hands of Zerubbabel (the spiritual one) laid down foundation, he says, to this house (namely to the man) and His hands will accomplish it"<sup>402</sup>. It is

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<sup>399</sup> Amos: 9: 14; Acts: 15: 16.

<sup>400</sup> Haggai: 2: 10: KJB: "In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,"; ROB: "In the twenty fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, there was the word of the Lord through the mouth of Haggai, the prophet, saying."

<sup>401</sup> The Son of God fixed (we have used the term "fixed" which in the Romanian language it means "to establish", "to make steadfast", for its twofold sense, of which the second meaning is in English "to repair" (E. l. t.'s n.)) the human nature in Himself (as on a "tent" in the "place" of the supreme solidity of the godhead), for making it to not fall anymore, being held just by God. That's why even the embodiment constitutes a deification of the human nature; the embodiment makes this nature to not be able to slip anymore from this consolidation of the human nature into lack of passions; but this mustn't be misinterpreted in the sense of a physical salvation, according to an accusation which the Western fathers bring it to the Oriental Ones. The human nature of Christ, from spiritual reasons, doesn't slip anymore. It is too close the truth and the supreme good to it to be anymore attracted by something inferior.

<sup>402</sup> Zachariah: 4: 9: KJB: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.";

here about the first creation of the man and the latter remake done by Christ Himself, through the unspoken union (23).

According to history it doesn't seem possible at all to have been Zerubbabel holding in his hand a tin stone, which to have seven eyes and even of the Lord, through which God looks all over the earth<sup>403</sup>. According to the history doesn't seem possible at all to be Zerubbabel the one who would have had in his hand a tin stone, which to have seven eyes, even the Lord's eyes, which to look all over the earth. Therefore being impossible to take these ones according to the letter, we are going to use the higher meaning of the written ones.

Zerubbabel is, like I've said often before, The Lord and our God Jesus Christ. And this stone is the faith in Him. Having this stone in hand it means that the faith into Christ it is made shown through fulfilling the commandments. This is because "the faith without deeds is dead"<sup>404</sup>, as also the deeds without faith. And the "hand" is obviously, the symbol of the deeds. So the Lord by holding in hand the stone, he teaches us to have in Him the faith shown through deeds. And the seven eyes of the Lord, with which this stone is adorned, are the seven works of the Holy Ghost (24).

"And will rest over Him, he says, the seven ghosts: the ghost of wisdom, the ghost of understanding, the ghost of cognizance, the ghost of science, the ghost of the advising, the ghost of mightiness, and the ghost of the fear of God"<sup>405</sup>.

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ROB: "The hands of Zerubbabel laid down the foundation of this temple and also his hands it will finish it, and you will know that the Lord Savaot has sent me to you."

<sup>403</sup> Zachariah: 4: 10: KJB: "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth."; ROB: "For who despised the time of these tiny beginnings? They will rejoice themselves by seeing the scales of the mason in the hand of Zerubbabel. And these seven (candles) are the eyes of the Lord which roam the whole earth."

<sup>404</sup> James: 2:26: KJB: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.>"; ROB: "For as the body without soul dead is, thus also the faith without deeds, dead is."

<sup>405</sup> Isaiah: 11: 2: KJB: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of

The ghost of the fearing of God it is shown into the restraint with deeds from sins; the ghost of the might, in the impulse and in the full of zeal movement towards working and accomplishing the commandments; the ghost of the counsel, in the habit of the discernment which helps to fulfill with rationality the godlike commandments and to discern the good ones from the bad ones; the ghost of the science makes us to know without mistake the modes of the virtuous activity, according to which, being us working, we don't fall ever out from the right judgment of the rationality; the ghost of the knowledge gives us the possibility to comprise with the mind the rationalities from the commandments, on which are founded the modes of activity of the virtues; the ghost of the understanding is the affectionate consent of the soul with the modes and with the rationalities of the commandments, of better said, its transformation in those ones, transformation through which there takes place a fusion of our natural powers and of the modes and of the rationalities of the commandments; the ghost of the wisdom makes us to elevate ourselves to the cause of the spiritual rationalities from the commandments and to the union with that cause; through this, by knowing as much as it is possible to the humans, in an unknown way, the simple rationalities of the things, which are in God, we draw like from the gushing spring of the heart the truth out of everything, scattering in diverse manners also to the other people (25). In this way we ascend on a certain road and according to a certain order to the ones which are the last ones towards God, but the closest to us, towards the first ones and the most far to us, and the closest to God (26).

For in fact from stopping to commit sins by fear we come to working the virtues by might and from working the virtues, or to science; and from the habit of the virtues, to the knowledge of the rationalities from the virtues. From these ones

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the Lord;”; ROB: “And will rest over him the ghost of God, the ghost of wisdom and of understanding, the ghost of the counsel and of might, the ghost of the knowledge and of the good faith”.

we go up to the habit which transforms the natural powers in the known rationalities of the virtues, namely to understanding and from this one to the simple and exact contemplation of the truth from all things. Finally, starting from this one, we will bring forth many and various pious rationalities of the truth from the wise contemplation of the sensitive things and of the intelligible beings.

Ascending therefore through these eyes of the faith, or through these enlightenments, we gather ourselves into the godlike unity of the wisdom, by concentrating the charisms (the gifts), which have been shared for us, through our ascensions, like stairs on the ladder of the virtues (27), not omitting, with the help of God, anything from the said ones. This is lest, by neglecting them bit by bit, to make our faith blind and without eyes, lacked of the enlightenments of the Ghost, which are imparted to us through the mediation of the virtues, and to be us sent, according to the justice, to the labors of the endless ages, as ones who have blinded the godlike eyes of the faith, in what concerns us (28).

This is because everyone who brought out these eyes of the faith from himself due to the unfulfilling of the commandments, he surely is going to be condemned, because he is not having God watching at him anymore<sup>406</sup>. This is, I reckon, the cause due to which the Scripture has called the faith tin stone because it punishes all the ones who don't adorn it through fulfilling the commandments and uses all the ones who keep it beautified with the works of the Ghost. "For it will be, says the great Simeon speaking about the Lord, towards the falling and raising of many from Israel"<sup>407</sup>; and this will be

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<sup>406</sup> The eyes of the faith, as evidence of the truths of the faith, faith achieved through deeds, though they are within us, helping us seeing, though they aren't ours, but they are the gift from God, or His works. Therefore though we see through them, they are the eyes through which God Himself looks inside us and around us. And we see through these eyes of God. In this sense God is known by the one who is known by God.

<sup>407</sup> Luke: 2: 34: KJB: "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;"; ROB: "And Simeon blessed them and said towards Mary, His mother:

towards the falling of the unfaithful ones, of course. For some people say about tin that it is composed from silver and led. But led is the symbol of rebuking, of punishment, of tormenting and of damnation, and silver is the image of brightness, of glory and of extolling. If it is so, then the faith indicated through tin on one hand rebukes, punishes and condemns the ones who have been proven to be weak in it, by not working the commandments, having maybe as led the helplessness of the body – this rebuking is strengthened through the union with the Word; and on the other hand is glorifies, enlightens and leads towards godhead the ones proven to be powerful in working the commandments, having as silver the godhead of the Word, which shines in the worthy ones, according to their power (30).

Other understood the tin stone like being our Lord Jesus Christ, as One Who is composed from two natures, from godhead and humanity. And if somebody wants to understand the faith in Christ, or Christ Himself in a spiritual manner, the faith and Christ are the led because they rebuke the soul, torment the body, punish the passions and condemn the demons, and silver because fill the mind of brightness through virtues, glorify it through knowledge and make it, by deifying it, light which mirrors the prime Light; in this sense must be understood also the “falling” and the “raising up” which will happen due to Him: He provokes the falling of the body, namely of the bodily thought and the raising up of the natural powers of the virtue and of the thoughts which sustain the knowledge. Simply speaking, the Word causes in the worthy ones the falling of the entire old man according to the image of Adam and of the letter of the law, and the raising up of the new man according to His image and to the ghost of the law (31).

But maybe the Scripture imagines the faith through the tin stone also for the fact that it gives possibility to the ones who darken their virtue and their knowledge to lighten all of

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behold, this One is put towards the falling and the raising of many from Israel and as a sign which will stir up resistances.”

them again through repentance, regaining the activity and the contemplation and coming back again to the full of light brightness of the life (32).

## Scholia

1. He shows in how many ways Zerubbabel is interpreted, being translated from Greek language.

2. The end (the ultimate target) of the virtue is the good, which it means the fulfillment and the completion of the godlike work. Towards this fulfillment leads the rational power (faculty) of the soul, using the power of the anger and of the lust, according to the nature. And in it comes forward the beauty of our resemblance to God, and the end of the contemplative philosophy it is the truth, which is the unitary and undivided knowledge of all the ones which are around God. Towards the truth is carried the clear mind, after it has totally rejected that judgment according to the senses; in this knowledge is unveiled undefiled the dignity of the godlike image.

3. Through women he understood the virtues of which end is the love; and through truth the not-quantitative knowledge. Knowing the law which reigns over the nature the price of these ones, namely of love and knowledge, he rejects, as a wine, the pleasure of the bodily passions and as a kingdom the insane lust for glory of all the ones dominated by the self-opinion in an unrestraint manner.

4. The face of the contemplative mind which directs itself towards the height of the true knowledge, as towards heavens, it is the virtuous disposition.

5. Another meaning of the same thing. According to this one those ones are written into heavens who willingly offer themselves to be written with the pen of the Ghost<sup>408</sup>. This is

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<sup>408</sup> The one who is not written inside himself by the pen of the Ghost, he is neither written in heavens. For he doesn't fit with the heavens; he hasn't become a piece of heavens. Will go up

because the Holy Ghost writes in heavens only the ones who want to be written and without forcing anybody.

6. Nobody can truly bless God whether he hasn't sanctified his body through virtues and hasn't enlightened his soul through knowledge.

7. The victory is the last end of the godlike toils of the soul on the ground of the deeds. This is the unmixed good. And the wisdom is the last end of the secret sights of the soul in the order of the knowledge (of the gnosis). This is the simple truth, towards which the mind leads the ones who liberated himself from the sensitive hallucinations and the rationality which has taken into domination the vital part of the soul. The meeting of these ones, of the victory and of the wisdom, or of the goodness and of the truth, unveils a sole glory into the ones in whom it is produced, irradiating the light of the resemblance.

8. With what we contribute to the virtue.

9. For what reason He is called God, the Lord of the fathers.

10. The fathers according to the ghost they make themselves willing fathers of the ones who want to be their sons, through the teaching that they are giving to them, creating them through their word and through their life according to God. And sons according to the ghost willingly make themselves to the ones whom they want to be their fathers, by receiving their teaching, by letting themselves willingly formed by those ones through their word and life. This is because the grace of the Ghost works the freely-consented birth of the ones who are giving birth and who are being born according to Him, what the parents according to the body don't have, they being the involuntary parents of some involuntary sons. This is because the conceiving of the ones who are born on the natural manner it is the deed of the nature, not of the will.

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in heavens only the one who has accommodated himself, from here, to heavens, only the one within whom the heavens previously has descended.

11. The number two indicates here the matter and the shape, of which encounter cause the making (the composing) of the body and of whom detachment causes the destruction of the body. Consequently the things which exist through the coming together of the matter and of the shape, they have a contrary end to the natural beginning, once the breaking destroys the creation. For creation and for breaking fight two powers: the one of the lust and the one of the anger. The first one wants to preserve the creation in existence; the second one fights for removing the detachment which follows to the breaking. The advocates of these powers are the cunning devils: some of them propose to the natural law the exit (the ecstasy) of the soul from the godlike ones through lust, of which symbol is the wine, and other the tyrannical domination through anger over the material ones, of which image is the "kingdom"<sup>409</sup>. They want to convince the mind to choose the passionate life. And the number one it means that soul simple according to the being, image of the three-hypostatical and supra-natural unity according to the being. The advocate of this one, namely of the soul, it is the mind, which is one as also the soul is one. The mind proves to the natural law, through the parable of the truth and of the "women", that both the faith in God and the love for Him are stringer than everything and convinces it to give the power to those ones.

12. The truth unveils itself as one and sole, when the plurality is removes through exceeding the plurality. The truth covers the knowing powers of all the ones that can cogitate and can be cogitated, as one which is through its supra-existential subsistence above the ones which understand and which are understood, embracing (circumscribing) through an infinite power the extreme ends of the things, namely their beginning and their end. Through this one the truth attracts towards itself the everybody's movement and gives to some of them the clear knowledge, of which grace they would be deprived, and to

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<sup>409</sup> Here is about an earthly "kingdom". We are specifying this because usually the word "kingdom" is used for naming the "kingdom of God" (E. l. t.'s n.).

others it gives the possibility of proven recognition of the good which they wanted, through an unspoken feeling, due to the impartation of that good.

13. Through the people of Babylon are categorically understood the thought kept into the slavery of the passions. Through Darius, the natural law; through Zerubbabel, the knowing (gnostic) mind; through Judaea, the virtue; through Jerusalem, the habit of the dispassion; through temple, the knowledge capable to receive the wisdom; through the ascension from Babylon to Judaea, the moving from the bodily ones to the spiritual ones through repentance.

14. The norm of the sharing of the spiritual goods it is the measure of the everyone's faith. This is because on the measure of the faith we increase in the zeal of the doing. The one who works, according to the analogy of his work he shows the measure of his faith, receiving the measure of the grace as he has believed. Consequently the envious one does wrong by gossiping. This is because it hangs on him to believe and to work according to the measure of the faith for receiving the grace.

15. How Zerubbabel is image of the Lord.

16. Nicely it has been shown the congruence between image and truth. This is because Zerubbabel wasn't taken himself into slavery, but he was born out from the ones who were at that time in the slavery of the Babylon and he became their liberator, likewise the Lord, being without sin, he was born from among us, was among us and was reckoned as one of us. He willingly put on the suffering characteristic of our nature, through which, truly enduring our natural helplessness, he liberated us from under the causing corruption mastery, and he elevated us from earth to heavens. Namely through His embodiment, he took without any diminishing, the whole our nature, uniting it with Himself through an unspoken union, but through the calling of the grace, only on the ones who joyfully received the calling and honored through deeds the grace of their rebirth.

17. “The body of the sin” is the one which it has its origin into the seed of the man. This is because in it there is as potency both the sin and the corruption as end of its existence. And “the body into the resemblance of the body of the sin” it is the body of God, conceived without male seed. He had the corruptibility according to the nature, through which it was like our body, and in the potency the sinless by nature, according to which was like us.

18. In report with the pure and supreme theology, the teaching comes in the second place. The first one occupies itself with the supreme teaching about the being. The second one it shows the supreme work of the Providence, which was called by the Ghost as “the Sunrise from beneath”. This is because within the teaching of the godlike embodiment it is comprised the creation of the ages and of the ones from ages and the borderless prolongation (indefinitely) of that life of the creatures according to the grace and above ages.

19. He who loves the good and beautiful things, he willingly tends towards the grace of the deification, being guided by Providence through the rationalities of the wisdom, and he who isn't in love with the grace he is drawn from the sin against his will and this thing is done by the righteous Judgment through diverse modes of punishments. The first one, namely the lover of God, he is deified through Providence, whilst the second one, namely the lover of the matter, he is stopped by Judgment to reach at the damnation.

20. Our reproachable fire it is the law of the body, the light of this fire is the habit of the passions to move themselves according to this law, and the reproachable flame it is the burning cause within us by the work of the passions. Or again, the reproachable fire it is the sin, the reproachable light is the habituation with the sin, and the flame is its work. Consequently it is not appropriate to the mind to warm itself to this fire, neither to lighten itself with this light, nor to burn in this flame. This is because what it is light to the pleasure of the senses, to the mind is deep and darkness.

21. The authentic faith serves to the truth by not having in itself any lie, and the good conscience bears within itself the power of the love, not being in it any transgression of the godlike commandment.

22. The resurrection is the restoring of the nature so that the nature exceeds now its state from Paradise. The superiority consists in general in the universal immovability, and in special unspoken godhead according to the grace of the saints.

23. The hands of the spiritual Zerubbabel are, maybe, on one hand the creator work, through which we receive the existence in order to achieve the happiness, and on the other hand the restoring work, through which we receive the grace on order of achieving the eternal happiness; or on one hand the grace, which produces within us, through our activity, the virtues, and on the other one, the undivided overflowing of the knowledge, of which we are imparted, through contemplation, due to this grace.

24. The faith was called "stone" for the strength, the not-changeability, the steadfastness and the total immovability of its truth, as also for its resilience against the assaults of the lie. The faith is held in "hand", being shown through this its power, which produces and sustains all the virtues. And the seven eyes, which the faith has, indicates its power of discernment, as also the fact that it embraces the full and without mistake knowledge of the temporary ones and it is capable of the sevenfold work of the Most-Holy Ghost, which the number makes it composed.

25. The explanation of each spiritual gift. It is appropriate to the fear to restrain itself from evil deeds. Appropriate to the might is to work the good ones. Appropriate to the counsel is to discern between the contrary ones. Appropriate to the science is to know without mistake the duties. Appropriate to the knowledge is to comprise with the deed the godlike rationalities from the virtues. Appropriate to the understanding it is the consent of the soul with the known

ones. Finally, appropriate to the wisdom is the not-understood union with God, through which the desire of the worthy ones becomes possession. This possession makes the one who is partaker to it to be God through participation and interpreter of the godlike happiness through an uninterrupted and not-pompous showing and clarifying of the godlike mysteries before the ones who need it.

26. The fear, which is in fact the first gift we achieve it, the Scripture has placed it at the end. The fear is the beginning of the wisdom. Starting from it we raise our understanding towards the target of the wisdom. And after we have achieved this one, we are in the immediate closeness of God Himself, not having anymore but only the wisdom like mediator of the union with Him<sup>410</sup>. But it is not possible to reach at the wisdom to the one who hasn't shaken himself off, first, through fear and the other intermediary gifts, of the pus of the nescience and of the dust of the sins. That's why the Scripture, taking account of the real order, in presents the wisdom as being the closest to God, and the fear as being closest to us. And this is for us to learning also the rule and the law of the good order.

27. The unity of the wisdom can be contemplated as existing undivided in diverse virtues which spring out of it, and on the measure that we increase in working all the virtues we concentrate it more and more, than it is unveiled again as a simple unity through the coming back to it of all the virtues started from it. This happens when we, for whom it launches from itself for the birth of each virtue, gather ourselves again into it, ascending through each virtue.

28. Blind faith has the ones who doesn't fulfill through faith the godlike commandments. For if the godlike commandments are light, it is proven that the one who doesn't fulfill the godlike commandments it is lacked of light and he bears only the empty name, but not the true one of the faith.

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<sup>410</sup> For the wisdom is in unmediated closeness to God, for in it are in a concentrated manner comprised all the gifts which we receive from God and the wisdom it is all that concerns the creature from God, one can say that God makes contact with the world through Sophia, and that the culminant stair to which the world can be elevated is Sophia.

29. The Scripture has indicated through the eyes of the Lord the paths of the Ghost. The ones who doesn't open these eyes by fulfilling the commandments, he doesn't have God watching him. And through many eyes God looks at the ones from earth, if the light of our virtue is ray of the godlike look<sup>411</sup>.

30. The tin characterizes the faith for it has the natural features of the silver and of the led. This is because if it isn't guarded, the faith punishes through the eternal damnation which it brings it upon the ones who haven't guarded it, pressing them down as the led. And the ones who guard it, it glorifies them, adorning them with shiny and great silver.

31. No one of the ones who commit the sin can bring as excuse for the sin the weakness of the body. This is because the union with the God Word has strengthened the whole nature, by untying it from the curse, not leaving any excuse to us for the willing impulse towards the passions. This is because the godhead of the Word, being always through grace within the ones who believe in Him, heralds the law of the sin from the body.

32. Like the tin getting black it gains again its luster, like so also the faithful ones, even if they become blackened through sins they regain again their shininess through repentance. Maybe out of these reason also the tin has been compared to the tin.

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<sup>411</sup> The look of God is affectionate, it is creator and modifier. The ray of the look of God produces our virtue, by sending into us a true spiritual energy. But we open the eye of God by striving to fulfill His commandments. We receive these commandments externally. But God transforms this external striving into a steadfast and pleasant quality of ours. The virtue is therefore also a kind of union with God, but through "looking at", from distance, and not a union which removes the "distance" (the diastase). The difference in degree between the union realized between man and God by the morality and the contemplation has been shown by Paul Hankamer, with the example of Schiller for the first one, and with the examples of Ekkehart and Goethe for the second one. For the last ones "the morality it still was a stair towards a final goal". Jacob Bohme, Bonn, Cohen, 1924, p. 25.

### Question no. 55

*"And all the ones from Israel, from twelve years old and above, except the children and the women, were forty three thousands three hundred and sixty. And their servants and maids, seven thousands three hundreds and seven; psalms singers and singers, eight hundreds and five; camels, four hundred and thirty five; horses, seven thousands seven hundreds and six; mules, eight hundred and forty five; donkeys, five thousands five hundred and twenty five"<sup>412</sup>. Please do a spiritual agape out of these so great and high things, written by the Ghost through the Prophet, regarding the sixth coming back from slavery. What does it mean this descent and this meaningless and unworthy of the Ghost story, of mentioning about horses, mules and donkeys and even with such a precision in counting?*

### Answer

Speaking with precision about these ones it is possible only to those ones, who for their much cleanness of their mind have received from God the whole grace that the people can receive (1). This is because by penetrating with the help of this grace in the flow of the secret views, these ones see only the rationalities of the written ones, disrobed of the vestment of the shapes. They don't occupy themselves at all with the symbols, which give to the views a sensitive form, but only in the case that they want in a most-wise manner, to corporeal show them to the ones who, due to their inexperience of the mind, they cannot raise above the perception of the senses, but they must exercise themselves first through sensitive shapes, and after that to want to climb to the archetypal rationalities which are above sensitive perception (2). But we reckon that isn't absurd to come close to the subtle rationalities through conjecture,

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<sup>412</sup> This counting doesn't correspond exactly either to the one from Nehemiah (II Ezra) 7, 66-69, or to the one from III Ezra 5, 63-69.

being given the natural faculty from within us, which desires itself after the knowledge of the godlike ones. This is because two good can result out from conjecture to the ones who are dominated by a sincere veneration towards the godlike ones: the one who approaches from conjecture the godlike things, or discover the truth regarding the cogitated ones and then he brings, joyfully, like sacrifice of praised, thanks to the One Who told him about what he has been searching for (3), or ascertains that the meaning of the written ones escapes to him and then he respects even more the godlike things, learning that their understanding exceeds his own power.

Therefore, by approaching myself also through conjecture, the written ones, I pray God to be helping me in the ones which I am going to say, for I know that the power of my understanding is too weak for the sublimity of the mysteries of the Scripture. If I succeed, I will owe the entire victory to God, Who has elevated me through understanding towards thanksgiving, and if I don't succeed, I will reckon also the lack of understanding as a good thing, which I will also owe to God, Who, cutting in advance, through His taking care of me, the pride that could have been born out of knowledge, He has made to me out of lack of understanding a motif of modesty (4). Consequently, by approaching myself through conjecture the meaning of the written ones, I am starting from the ones from before the Scripture. In the chapter from before these ones has been written about Zerubbabel: "And when the young man came out, raising his face to heavens towards Jerusalem, he blessed the Emperor of the heavens"<sup>413</sup>. One would understand that he came out after he answered to the questions of King Darius. So he came out from that one's face. Darius is, though, as I've said before, the law which masters upon nature (5). In fact this meaning of him corresponds to the interpretation of his own name. This is because the Darius's name it means

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<sup>413</sup> III Ezra: 4: 58: ROB (this book isn't present in KJB): "And when the young Zerubbabel came out, raising his face to the sky before Jerusalem, he blessed the Emperor of the heavens, saying."

“generation”, or “genealogy” (generation’s book), or “the one comprised into a genealogy”, like the ones who know the exact meaning of this word are saying. But the word “generation” or “genealogy” expresses a natural law, because the “generation” and all the ones which are comprised into a “genealogy” stay under nature (6).

Therefore we did well by understanding through Darius the natural law. This is because the law of the nature embraces the genres (the generations) and the species which are under the nature, and also all the ones which are contemplated in connection with the nature, namely the time and the space. This is because all the ones without which there doesn’t exist a created thing, are contemplated in the same time with that thing<sup>414</sup>.

Darius is, consequently, as I’ve said, the nature’s law. And Zerubbabel is the contemplative mind, which, coming out from the law of the nature, symbolized by Darius, has raised above the whole order of the thing saw from under the time and the space and has raised his face, namely the disposition capable of knowledge, achieved through virtue, towards heavens, in other words towards the sublimity of the spiritual beings; towards the spiritual Jerusalem from heavens, namely towards that Jerusalem, of which “walls are painted on the palms of the Lord”<sup>415</sup>. For in it is the dwelling of all the ones who rejoice themselves<sup>416</sup> and to it truly turn back all the ones who escape from slavery and search for their house from heavens<sup>417</sup>, as the Apostle says (7); all those, who can say with

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<sup>414</sup> Saint Maximos discerns between nature and the ones which are in connection with the nature (*τα περι την φύσιν* (nature, E. l. t.’s n.)). The nature is the totality of the things which are born and perish, and the ones in connection with the nature are the time and the space.

<sup>415</sup> Isaiah: 19: 16: KJB: “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.”; ROB: “Behold I have engraved you in My palms; your walls are always before My eyes!”

<sup>416</sup> Psalms: 87: 7: KJB: “As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee”; ROB: 86: 6: “For in you is the dwelling place of the ones who rejoice themselves”. (To be observed that the content of the correspondent verse from the psalm from KJB doesn’t have the same content (E. l. t.’s n.)).

<sup>417</sup> II Corinthians: 5: 2: KJB: “For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with

the great David: “If I will forget you Jerusalem, be my right hand forgotten; let my tongue stick on my throat if I won’t remember you”<sup>418</sup>. Through the “right hand” one understands the spiritual working of the godlike and most praised commandments, and the “tongue glued to the throat” is the activity of knowing our rationality, which due to the nescience stays glued on the throat, namely to the passion which has its headquarters night to the throat, and due to this reason cannot be put in movement by the desire after the unspoken goods and that’s why it cannot taste the goodness of the Lord.

Therefore Zerubbabel who, by rushing himself towards Jerusalem, brings the rationalities from under time and nature (9), it is our contemplative mind. But he can also be the creator Word, the One Who is above us, Who came among us like one of us, namely He made Himself man, to gather through embodiment to Himself the ones who willingly rolled themselves down into sufferance and into life in passions and in the death of the body. So, either he is the mind, or the Word, Zerubbabel brings them out together with himself and bring them with him towards the heavenly Jerusalem, on all them who has become, as much as possible, alike him. Their consummation into virtue and into knowledge was imagined symbolically by the Scripture through the diverse species and numbers mentioned before. This is because every right and loving of God man, turning him in spiritual way towards the Jerusalem from above, he fulfills the mentioned numbers of the diverse species, by gathering the rationalities of each species and number in a unique plenitude of the virtue and of the knowledge. This is limpidly shown by the sense of the place from above mentioned into the Scripture.

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our house which is from heaven;”; ROB: “For that’s why we also sigh, in this body, wishing to put on our dwelling from heavens,”

<sup>418</sup> Psalm: 137: 5-6: KJB: “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. // If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”; 136: 5-6: ROB: “If I will forget you, Jerusalem, forgotten be my right hand! // Let my tongue to be glued to my throat, If I won’t remember you, if I won’t put Jerusalem forth, as beginning of my joy.”

"And there were all the ones of Israel from twelve years old and above, except the children and women, forty three thousands three hundred and sixty". It is to be admired the exactness of the words of the Ghost, Who notes here that no one of the ones counted in Jerusalem after they went out from Babylon, namely form the confusion of this century, wasn't under age twelve. Through this one the Scripture secretly showed, that only the one who has raised himself above feeling (sensitive perception) and above time (because this it means the number twelve which is composed by five, namely the five senses and by seven, namely by time) (10) and has cut off any affection of the soul for them, has come out from their confusion, hurrying up towards the city from above. And only this one has with him, except the children and the women, the number of forty three thousands three hundred and sixty.

"Children" are all the thoughts referring to the natural and innocent affects and independent of our will, and the "women", either the cogitations, or the lusts and the natural pleasures which don't bring any damnation upon the ones who have them, being the necessary consequence of the natural lusting. This is because even the simplest food causes us a natural pleasure, even if we don't want it, for it satisfies our need from before. Likewise also the drink, through the fact that it quenches the displeasure of the thirst, or the sleep, through the fact that it renews the power spent through watchfulness. Also all the other functions of our nature, which are on one side necessary for its sustaining, and of the other side useful to the ones who strive themselves for achieving the virtue. All of these, even they aren't counted with the men, they though go out with any mind which runs away from the confusion of the sin, lest this one to the kept due to them in the slavery of the condemnable and contrary to the nature passions, which hang on our will and they don't have their source in us in anything else but in the movement of the according to nature affects (11). But they aren't counted together, because the affects which

preserve the nature in the life from here cannot be moved with us to the immortal and eternal life (12).

The four myriads (forty thousands) are the fourth of the general virtues. With which, the mind, by crossing the nature and the time, it reached at the happy target of the dispassion. Let's explain ourselves: The Myriad (the number ten thousands) it is indicated by the figure of the unities and cannot be symbolized by any other figure, being according to the support identical to the unity and differing only through cogitation, like the end differs to the beginning. This is because the myriad it is the end of the unity and the unity is the beginning of the myriad, or better said, the myriad is the unity set in movement and the unity is the myriad before being set in movement (13). But likewise each of the general virtues it has as beginning and as end the godlike monad, namely God, because it starts out of Him and ends in Him and it is one with God, differing only through cogitation. This is because it is proven that from Him and towards Him it has its origin any virtue.

Or maybe the Scripture understands through the four myriads (forty thousands) the four advancements in fulfilling the godlike commandments along the contemplation and the knowledge. Each of the advancements goes to the proximate ten. Thus the first advancement consists in the simple working of the commandments by the beginners, after their runaway from sin (14). It fulfills the first decade, which it is in the same time also a monad. The second advancement it is the one which embraces through each commandments the other ones. This is because the tenfold worked decade produced the hundred. The third advancement it is the multiplication by ten of the hundred through the law of the nature. This is because the nature's law is also tenfold (15) as one which consists from ten parts, namely: from the three powers of the soul, from the five senses, from the vocal function and from the natural fecundity. The man used the power of the rationality (16) in searching for the cause and for the goods from around the cause; the man uses the power of the lust towards desiring the searched for things,

and he uses the wrath towards guarding and loving them. The senses, at their turn, serve the man for discerning the things (17), this discernment being at its turn divided in five and from which is born the science. This fivefold difference divides the things in “the started ones” and “the not started ones” (19), in “the ones which are to be cogitated” and in “the ones which aren’t to be cogitated”, in “the ones which are to be spoken about” and in “the ones which aren’t to be spoken”, in “the ones which can be done” and in “the ones which cannot be done”, in “the corruptible ones” and in “the incorruptible ones”. And the man uses the vocal function towards speaking, and he uses the fecundity towards increasing the searched for, desired, loved, known, and spoken about goods. Thus the hundred multiplied with ten through the law of the nature becomes thousand. And the fourth advancement is the climbing, through contemplation and knowledge, of the natural law, with the shown divisions, towards the original rationality of each commandment. At the end of this climbing, it is contemplated the concentrated myriad, indicated by the figure of the first unity. This is because the one who fulfills the commandments in a simple manner, and then he embraces in fulfilling each of them the others, and then he unites with the embracing of these ones the distinctions of the natural law and he climbs this one also in the end, through knowledge (in a gnostic way), towards the rationality of each commandment, he has concentrated the four myriads, honored at each advancement, by the mystery of the unity, in which the rationality of the myriad is gathered.

Or the four myriads it means also the four general lacks of passions (20). The first dispassion it is the consummated restraint from the sins with the deed, ascertained to the beginners (21). The second dispassion is the total rejection of the thoughts which consent to the sins. This one we find it at the ones who cultivate the virtue with rationality (22). The third one is the total lack of movement of the lust towards passions. This is proper to the ones who contemplate in a spiritual way in

the countenance of the things their rationalities (23). The fourth dispassion is the total cleaning even of the simple imagining of the passions. This one we find it in the ones who have made their mind, through knowledge and contemplation, a clean and transparent mirror of God (24).

So the one who has cleaned himself of the work of the passions, who liberated himself from the cogitation consenting with them, he has stopped the movement of the lust towards them and has made his mind clean, even from the simple imagining of them, having the forty thousand he goes out from the matter and from the earthly ones and hurries up towards the godlike and peaceful region of the spiritual world.

Thus we understand the forty thousands. And the three thousands indicate the consummated, right, pious and rational teaching about the Holy Trinity and of one being; according to which we believe and we praise the three-hypostatical unity like one God (25).

And the number three hundreds imagines here the idea of the Providence, first because through the shape of the letter which indicates it<sup>419</sup>, it is imagined the power that, coming from above, crosses through the ones from bellow and comprises the extremities of the two sides, through what the Providence is shown, which gathers everything in an unspoken way. The second because this number was honored through the image of the cross on which has been done the great mystery, the first one and the hidden one of the Providence. This is because the mystery of the Embodiment of God was a mode of unspoken working of the Providence. Maybe in this sign of the cross and of the name of the One Who was crucified on it the great patriarch Abraham also dared, when he went out and overcame the enemy powers indicated through kings. This is because it is said that he went out with 318 servants, namely with this sign and with the name of Jesus (26). This is because for many times the Scripture unveils, to the clean ones, its thought through the shape of the letters.

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<sup>419</sup> In Greek language the number 300 is spelled with the letter T.

And if somebody wants to know the thought of the Holy Scripture also from the number, he will find out that also through the number is indicated the Providence<sup>420</sup>. This is because the work of the Providence consists not only in preserving the nature with the undiminished existence, but also in doing so that nothing lacks to the nature for becoming happy through grace<sup>421</sup>. Therefore, by adding somebody to two hundred another hundred, he totals three hundred. And through this number is indicated the nature and the virtue. The nature is indicated by the number two hundred, as one which consists of matter and shape. This is because the matter is divided for the four elements of itself, and the shape in fivefold for the senses which lay on the dough of the matter the imprint of the shape (27). By multiplying now forty times five, or fifty times four, we obtain the number two hundreds. And the number one hundred it means the consummated mind, as one which comprised the tenfold decade of the godlike commandments. At this reaching Abraham, he becomes father of Isaac, because being dead according to the nature he became, according to the ghost, birth giver of the life and of the joy. Therefore by adding to two hundreds one hundred, you obtain the number three hundred, which indicates the Providence that sustains the nature in its tendency towards happiness<sup>422</sup> (28).

And the number sixty it means the natural power which fulfills the commandments and has made itself consummated through the rationalities of the virtues. This is because the number six it means the power of activity of the nature, as one that consists from the own parts. Due to this reason it has been written also that God made the world in six days. And the number ten it shows the consummation of the virtue by

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<sup>420</sup> In the previous paragraph it has been shown the idea of the Providence out of the written shape of the number, and now it is shown out of the number itself.

<sup>421</sup> A literary translation: For the work of the Providence consists not only in preserving the undiminished nature according to the rationality of the existence, but also in making it without lack according to the happy existence, achieved through grace.

<sup>422</sup> The Providence sustains the nature according to its happy rationality.

fulfilling the commandments. Consequently the number sixty (29) limpidly indicates the natural power which receives the godlike rationalities which are into the commandments.

Therefore the forty thousand added to three thousands three hundred and sixty indicate the consummated rationality of the virtue, the venerated mystery of the Theology, the true target of the Providence and the power of activity of the nature which has been improved through virtues. So, the one who has liberated, through ghost, the mind from the body, from senses and from world, he comes out from them, leaving their admixture and the confusion (30), as the ones of yore the Babylon; he hurries himself up towards the city from above, having his mind detached from any affection towards something.

"And their servants and housemaids, seven thousands three hundred and seven" – the Law says about servants and about housemaids: The servants and the housemaids from among Hebrews let them serve for seven years, and in the seventh year to be them set free. And the servants and the housemaids from another nation let them serve forever". I think that he calls "forever" the year fifteenth of liberation.

The Jew servant and the Jew housemaid are the rationality and cogitation<sup>423</sup>, which serve to the philosopher who occupies himself with the doing for six years, helping him to study everything that contributes to the moral beauty and to the modes of the virtues. This is because the rationality and the cogitation serve to anybody who occupies himself with the doing, as a servant and a housemaid, studying and creating the modes of the virtuous activity (31). And their whole power is directed against the spirits of the evilness, which oppose to the moral doing. Therefore by bringing to accomplishment the working philosophy, which has been indicated by the number "six" of the years (for it has been said that the number "six" it

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<sup>423</sup> Rationality in Greek language is of masculine gender: λόγος; and the cogitation it is of feminine gender: διάνοια. They serve to the one from the first stair of the climbing.

means the working philosophy)<sup>424</sup>, the rationality and the cogitation are set free to come back to the spiritual contemplation of the rationalities from the things, which are related to them. They have reached then at the year “seventh”, namely to the habit of the dispassion (32). This is because the passions have been enslaved through the much striving of the rationality and of the cogitation united with it and that’s why they came out from and went away from the soul.

And the servant and the housemaid of another nation are the powers of the anger and of the lust<sup>425</sup>. These ones are forever enslaved by the mastery of the rationality, to serve for achieving the virtues through manhood and temperance. And they are not set free until the death of the miserable body is swallowed by the borderless life, and until does appear clearly the icon of the eternal kingdom, having imprinted in it, through imitation, the whole shape of the archetype. Reaches here, the contemplative mind unleashes the anger and the lust, transforming the last one in clean pleasure and in the undefiled attraction for the godlike love, and the first one in spiritual ardor, in fiery steadfastness and in sober madness (38). In this state reached according to the merit the great ray of the untroubled light, the great Apostle Paul, when he heard King Agrippa saying to him: “You are crazy, Paul”<sup>426</sup>. But also he himself writes to the Corinthians: “That either go we out of ourselves, it is for God, or if we are with the mind settled down, this is for you”<sup>427</sup>. He calls the sober madness, the one after God, “going out from the self” (ecstasy), as one which brings the

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<sup>424</sup> The number six symbolizes the six days of work during the week, and therefore the activity in general.

<sup>425</sup> The power of the anger in Greek language is of masculine gender: θυμός, and the lusting power is of feminine gender: επιθυμία.

<sup>426</sup> Acts: 26: 24: KJB: “And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.”; ROB: “And these things being spoken by him, for his defense, Festus said to him with a loud voice: Paul, you are insane! Your much learning leads you to madness.”

<sup>427</sup> II Corinthians: 5: 13: KJB: “For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.”; “For, if we went beside ourselves, it is for God, and if we are with the mind whole, it is for you.”

mind outside the created things, even the mind is sober in itself and thoughtful.

And the number of the servants I reckon that it indicates the temporary life, lived according to rationality and together with the modes of the dispassion (34). During this one the mind, using the rationality and the cogitation as some Jewish servants and housemaids which serve to the creature, it decides the measures of the help which these ones must give it to the virtue, removing them to contemplation. By taking also care of anger and of lust, as of some servants and housemaids of another nation, like a master takes care of his servants, it leads them to the same liberty from the end (35). Namely this is because it transforms the lust into the desire which enjoys itself of the godlike ones, and the anger in the endless vigor of the lust which enjoys them, making the servants of another nation true Jews according to the grace.

“Singers and psalmists eight hundred and fifty five”. The “singers” are the ones who announce the godlike word (rationality) through the modes of the virtue with the deed, without contemplation (36). And the “psalmists” are the ones who secretly initiate others in the godlike word (rationality), through the modes of the virtue united with the sweetness of the knowledge from contemplation; enchanting their spiritual ears (37).

Their number indicates the knowledge of the eternal things (38), as much as it is allowed to the people. From the number eight hundred and fifty, “eight hundred” indicates the future rationalities of the knowledge, and “fifty” of the virtue. At last, “five” shows the science of the things from here, as we have shown before by speaking about the number “five”.

“Camels three hundred and thirty five. The camels which come out together with the sons of Israel liberated from the bitter slavery, are the different natural representations (contemplations) of the seen things, which are composed, like the camel is, on one hand of the countenances of the seen ones which relate themselves to the senses and are, to say so, their

feet, and on the other hand of the higher rationalities, seen within them with the ghost, which relate themselves to the mind and are, to say so, by themselves.

Maybe about these camels the great Isaiah said, prophetically foretelling the glory of the spiritual Jerusalem: "And you will be covered by the camels of Midian and Ephah"<sup>428</sup>. They are the representations spiritual (contemplations) of the bodily natural affects (passions) (39). This is because Midian is interpreted as "the emptying of the stomach", or "bloody clay", or "human and of the mother sweats", and Ephah "the possession of the back", which is the contemplation elevated above the bodily passions. This is because the back of the soul is the body, as one which is behind it. So the Scripture says here that the spiritual place or residence of the peaceful and undivided knowledge of the mysterious views it is alike a holy city, covered by them like by some cattle.

The same sense is shown also by the number itself, which indicates the rational movement around the time and the nature (40).

"And horses, seven thousands seven hundreds and six". "Horse" is that one who runs in his life on the road of the virtuous ones, having the whole vigor of the wrath (anger). This is because it is said that the bladder of the horse stays in the nails of the feet, which he has from the nature. That's why also it was reckoned the most capable and strong on the way from all the other domestic and submitted to the people animals. To them the great prophet Habakkuk compares also the holy Apostles, when he says through the ghost: "And You mounted on the sea Your horses, which troubles many waters"<sup>429</sup>. He

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<sup>428</sup> Isaiah: 60: 6: KJB: "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord."; ROB: "Caravans of camels will cover you, and dromedaries from Midian and Ephah. All of them arrive from Sheba, loaded with gold and incense, singing the praises of the Lord."

<sup>429</sup> Habakkuk: 3: 15: KJB: "Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters."; ROB: "With Your horses You wander the sea, the flood of the vast

calls “horses” the holy and blessed Apostles, who bear the savior word of the truth before the nations and the emperors, into the whole world, which figuratively he calls it “sea”. And he compared the nations with the waters. This is because also the nations are troubled and agitated by that great power from the word of the Ghost and passed by the savior earthquake from disbelieving, from nescience, to knowledge and from the sin to the virtue.

This is shown also by the number itself of the horses, which imagines the habituation to the practical philosophy of the virtue. This is because the number “seven thousands and seven hundreds”, as number which indicates the time, it shows the nimble movement of the virtues, and “thirty six” the activity of the nature which runs together with the virtues (41).

“And the mules eight hundred and forty five”. The mule is, according to that meaning of praise, the habituation which doesn’t bring the sin as fruit (42). For this reason it has been ordered, in the most fitted and appropriate to the Scripture manner, that the one elected king in Israel to not sit on a horse, but on a mule. Through this the Scripture show that the contemplative mind, which reigns over the meanings and the representations (views) of the things, as also over the own movements, it must have a habituation which is fruitless of evil, namely one which not to conceive and not to give birth to the evil. It must be carried by this habituation when it moves into contemplation, lest, by occupying itself with the spiritual studying of the things, to fall carelessly under the power of someone from the evil ghosts, which can corrupt through something from the sensitive ones, the clean disposition of the heart.

We know that in the Scripture the mule has also a reproachable meaning. For instance it says: “Do not be like the

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waters”.

horse and the mule, to which there is no understanding”<sup>430</sup>. He Scripture calls “horse” the habit of searching for the pleasures of the passions<sup>431</sup> (43), and “mule” the habit which neither conceives nor gives birth to the good. The Scripture forbids both of them to the ones who want the salvation: the first one because it works the sin, the second one because doesn’t work the virtue. Also in this reproachable meaning must be taken the mule of Absalom, on which ridding this one went out to kill his parent. Through this the Ghost shows that that one wounded by the vain glory, due to the virtue and to the knowledge, he vainly feeds the mane of the self-appreciation, trimming it and mixing it as on a mule, for deceiving the watchers by showing a moral behavior. That one by ridding on it, he imagines that he will overthrow his father who born him through the teaching of the word, aiming to kidnap with pride and forcedly for himself the glory of the virtue and of the knowledge, which his father has it from God.

But by exiting in the width of the natural contemplation into ghost, to the rational war for the truth, due to the non-mortified feeling he remains hanged by the hair on the bush of the oak of the material views. Thus the self-appreciation itself, which ties his mind on those ones, it serves to him towards death, by suspending him between earth and sky. This is because the one who is dominated by the vain glory he doesn’t have the knowledge as sky which to pull him out from the self-appreciation which holds him down, but neither the sole of the humble creature as earth to pull him downwards from the haughtiness which holds him up (44). On this one the pious teacher who born him, letting himself carried on by the love for people, he weeps him even after he dies, because, like God, he

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<sup>430</sup> Psalms: 32: 9: KJB: “Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.”; 31: 10: ROB: “Don’t be like a horse and like a mule to which there is no understanding: with curb and with bridle I will squeeze their jaws to not come they close to you.”

<sup>431</sup> Jeremiah: 5: 8: KJB: “They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour’s wife.”; ROB: “They are fattened horses, and each one neighs after the woman of his neighbor.”

doesn't want the death of the sinner, but to come back and to be alive<sup>432</sup>.

And for understanding also in another way the place (45) David it means, of course, the active mind, and Absalom the self-appreciation, born out from the active mind in togetherness with the feeling (with the perception)<sup>433</sup>. This is because the feeling is the daughter of King Geshur, who being taken in marriage by David, she gave birth to Absalom. And "Geshur" is interpreted as "the guide of the wall". The wall is, of course, the body. And the guide of the body is the law of the body, or the feeling. Out of this one is Absalom born, which is interpreted as "the reckoned peace of the father", which is, obviously, the self-appreciation. This is because by reckoning that we have defeated the passions, we give birth to the self-appreciation. The great David, noticing that this one has rebelled against him, because he has stopped the doing through knowledge, leaving the tent, Jerusalem and Judaea, he flees beyond Jordan, in the land of Gilead, which is interpreted "the removal of the witness", or "their unveiling". This shows that David reckons himself unworthy, due to the rebelled imagination, of the holy tent, namely of the mystical theology, of Jerusalem, namely of the knowledge which sees the godlike ones and of Judaea, namely of confessing the joy for his deeds.

This means that the mind removes its powers from joy to sadness (46) and to the knowledge or to confessing the things done before; in other words to remember all mistakes individually; because this is "their unveiling". Simply speaking, it moves itself through cogitation in the time from before the grace (because this it means "to cross beyond Jordan), when it

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<sup>432</sup> Hezekiah: 33: 11: KJB: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"; ROB: "Say to them: as it is true that I am alive, it is also true that I don't want the death of the sinner, but that the sinner to turn back from his way and to be alive. Turn yourselves back; turn yourselves back from your evil ways! What to die you for, house of Israel?"

<sup>433</sup> The mind (*vouς*) being in Greek language of masculine gender, and the feeling (*αίσθησις*) of feminine gender, the icon of their marriage is appropriate here.

was stranger to the gift of the virtue and of the knowledge. In this way, by knowing its own helplessness and by achieving the deep humbleness, which opposes to the self-appreciation, through the conscience of its state, it kills the rebel, namely the self-appreciation, which passed by to him when he was in much sadness. And thus he comes back to the own glory and reigns over the land of Judah and reigns over Jerusalem and serves in the holy tent of God a clean and undefiled service.

But let's come back to the number of the mules of the Jews liberated from slavery and to look according to our power at the spiritual sense from it. "Mules, he says, were eight hundred and forty five". This number indicates the consummated dispassion of the mind towards the sensitive ones and towards the senses, on the ground of the habit of being fruitless to the sin, namely of the habit of not giving birth to the sin. This is because the number "eight hundreds", taken in praising meaning, it means the characteristic dispassion of the future age, the number "forty" indicates the insensitive things, and "five" indicates the senses (47).

"And donkeys, five thousands two hundred and twenty five". The donkey (48) is the body which serves to the soul, by carrying the burdens and the toils of the deeds for achieving the virtue; in other words, the virtuous habit of the body. The same kind of donkeys had the sons of the great James than they could bring from Egypt in the land of promise the wheat necessary for food, namely the spiritual knowledge, gathered from contemplating of the nature like from Egypt and closed in the sacks of the thoughts, which they place through doing, above the bodies, transporting them towards the future life.

And the round number of these donkeys it shows the constant moving of the virtuous habit of the soul towards deeds, by following without deviating the word of the knowledge. This is because the cognizant of these things calls the spherical movement as unchanged, as one which remains the same in all circumstances, more than the other movements of the things (49).

I have said these ones, according to your power of understanding and of saying. And if somebody would want to say that in these ones are symbolized the diverse stairs of the Church's believers and their dispositions, he wouldn't be wrong. Thus the "men" are the ones who have reached, as much as it is possible, to the measure of the fulness of the age of Christ and they commit the virtue from love, through their own decision.

The "servants" and the "housemaids" are the ones who bear the burden of the working philosophy by the fear of the eternal torments, with which they are being menaced. The "singers" are the ones who preach beautifully and well the word to the creature and heal the passions of the others. The "psalmists" are the ones who show through contemplation the beauty of the cognizance of the godlike words (rationalities) and remove, like darkness, the nescience from others. The "camels" are the ones who tame through rationality the evilness of the will, guiding it towards virtue. The "horses" are the ones who run well in the stadium of the life pleasant to God. The "mules" are the ones who have mixed habits and who prove in the common life a practical wisdom, without blemish. The "donkeys" or the "cattle for yoke" are the ones who must tire themselves with the deed and are receiving through contemplation to be placed the rationality upon them. By summing all of these we do the fulfilling of the holy Church, adorned with many beauties and by the virtue of many.

In my opinion, the word about the spiritual meaning of these mysteries has reached to an end. If there would be somebody full of the richness of the grace of the knowledge, able to see, like the great Samuel in a spiritual sense the ones said before, let him unveil also to us the comprised meaning of the written ones, to irradiate the high light of the truth in everybody, and to convince all them who are able to learn that nothing is written without a purpose and in vain by the Holy Ghost, even if we cannot comprise it. This is because all of them are on purpose and full of mystery and aim the salvation

of the people, of which beginning and end it the wisdom, which starts by producing the fear (51) and end by giving birth to love, or better said it becomes itself to us, for our sake, fear at the beginning (52), to stop from sin the one who falls in love with the wisdom, and at the end it becomes love, for filling up with spiritual joy the ones who give everything for sharing themselves of wisdom.

These I believe that are the “men” about whom the Ghost writes, these are the “servants and the housemaids”, the “psalmists and the singers”, the “camels”, the “mules” and the “donkeys”. It is not about the ones known by the bodily feeling, but about the ones understood by the clean mind and who are described by the pen of the grace.

It has been done, with the help of God, the fifth “tome”.

### Scholia

1. The full grace of the Ghost is the wisdom as potency, as habit and as work, which embraces the whole knowledge as much as reaches at the people consummated into Christ. Through it, the mind, by leaving the images perceived through senses, it penetrates into the variety of the rationalities unveiled to the ones which have been made and have been written, by synthesizing the godlike characteristics which are in them in a whole of godlike shape, out of which by irradiating in a unitary way the undivided knowledge of all the things, the light of the truth uses to shine out.

2. The ones who occupy truly themselves with the knowledge the gnostics), by knowing the rationalities of the mysteries written into Scriptures, they use the types of the history as some examples, for elevating the cogitation of their students; they harmonize the spiritual meaning to the letter of the history, to save both the image (the type) for the senses, and the meaning for the human mind. This is because the man consists of soul and of body, and therefore one and the same man has both mind and feeling.

3. The praise is a word which announces the godlike beauty; the praising is a relation of the one who praises with what he praises, namely an uttering of the words which herald the godlike greatness. Through it, it is born the habit of the knowledge, which transforms the one who praises in the praised one. And the “sacrifice of this praise” isn’t only the total killing of the contrary to nature passions and the overcoming of the according to the nature affects, but also the total bringing of the one who praises to God.

4. The knowledge which is not bridled by the fear of God through deeds, it produces haughtiness, because it convinces the haughty one to present as his own what it has been given to him and to transform in self-praising the gift of the Word. And the virtuous activity, which grows up together with the sake of God, by not receiving the knowledge of the things which are above the ones which must be done, determines the active one to become humble and to gather in himself into himself through the rationalities from above his own power.

5. The one who has defeated the irrational movements of the contrary to nature passions through faith and through love for God, he goes out even from the law of the nature, and his rationality moves itself in the country of the intelligible ones, taking out from the foreign slavery also what is of the same nation according to nature, together with the ones proper to them.

6. Under nature is everything that is either subject (support) or togetherness with the subject, or in subject. Out of these ones are collected the definitions of the things which can be defined. This is because the ones who make whole the diverse natures of the things are reckoned as related to their definitions, precisely indicating the respective thing, as ones which subsist in a natural way into subject or together with the subject and out of which the subject has its existence, not being possible to be contemplated outside the subject.

And around the nature there are the ones which can be thought before of in the same time with it. This is on one hand

because the things were made somewhere and sometime; and on the other hand, because from the first making of the things it must be thought together with them also their position and their movement. These are the time and the space, in which there is the nature according to the position from outside and after the beginning of the movement, but not according to the substance. This is because the nature not out of them it consists, but into them it has exterior the beginning of the existence and the position.

When therefore we contemplate only the rationalities of the existence of the genres, of the species and of the individuals, we notice in their existential rationalities the differences which constitute them. But when we search for their birth, by asking "where" and "when", in a necessary manner are presented to us in the same time with the things also the space and the time, making us to contemplate their beginning and their position, without which there doesn't exist anything of the created ones. This is because nothing is free from circumscribing through beginning and position.

7. Jerusalem and the heavenly dwelling place are the dispassionate habit with the virtue and with the knowledge, in which there are not contained any wrong idea which to fight with it.

8. The tongue, he says, it is the symbol of the knowing activity of the soul, and the throat is the sign of the natural love for the body. Therefore he who sticks these ones together in a worthy of reproach manner, he cannot remember the peaceful habituation with the virtue and with the knowledge, sweetening himself zealously with the troubling of the bodily passions.

9. Darius, he says, it means the law of the nature. And the law of the nature embraces the nature and the time, as one which masters the movement of everything, both of the ones according to the nature, and of the ones from around the nature. Consequently the mind which comes out from under the law of the nature, as from Darius, it raises itself above the time and above the nature, not being retained by any of the

meanings from under the nature and time, lest, bearing the icons of the corruptible ones, to become a temple of the idols, and instead of having only one God, to have many images of the unclean passions which to worship<sup>434</sup>.

10. What a mystery it contains the number twelve.

11. Through children, who weren't counted, but they went out together with their parents, he understood the thoughts<sup>435</sup> of the affects which stay in our power, which even they are born out of us, but it doesn't hang on us to use them however we want. And through women he understood the desires, which care caused by the natural and irreproachable affects which don't hang on us. These one are being brought out by the mind when it starts going towards that life according to God, to not fall into the slavery of the contrary to the nature passions.

12. He shows the cause due to which the Scripture didn't count the women and the children together with the men.

13. The myriad (the number ten thousands) it is the end of everything that moves, and the unity is the beginning of the myriad which doesn't move. This is because the beginning of each end it is the lack of movement towards it, and the end of each beginning is the finishing of its movement. Thus is also the faith, being by nature, the beginning of the virtues, it has like end the fulfillment of the good from within them, and the good by nature, as end of the virtues, having the faith as beginning, it is concentrated within the faith. This is because the faith is the good concentrated within, and the good is the activated faith. And God is faithful and good by nature; he is faithful like the first good and good as the last object of the desire. So these ones are to Him in every aspect identical to each other, because they do not really differ through any

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<sup>434</sup> The idols are taken here with the meaning of definite images and concepts, reckoned right God. (So reckons them Gregory of Nyssa). The mind as it receives in itself definite images and concepts, or widens itself to contemplate the borderless godhead it makes itself temple of idols, or temple of God.

<sup>435</sup> The thoughts = λογισμοί in Greek language are of masculine gender.

rationality, but only the cogitation discerns them, due to the movement of the ones which start from Him and end at Him. Therefore the myriad by imagining the last object of the desire, it represents the consummated desire of the ones who move themselves towards Him. And the unity of the symbol of the first good, it represents the consummated steadfastness of the ones which start from Him. Consequently the four myriads (forty thousands) are the consummated good shown through deeds by each general virtue, according to its nature.

14. The ones who runs away from evil and simply shuns himself to not sin, he works the Ten Commandments. And the one who, in the consummated work of each commandment, he comprises also the other ones, because all of them can be seen in each one by working one of them, he has made a hundred out of the decade. This is because the consummated guarding of each one of the commandments with the deed, it means the full accomplishing of the other ones. And again, the one who has reached with full cognizance at their consummated discernment, he has made a thousand out of the hundred. And at last, the one who has penetrated with the mind through contemplation to the consummated rationalities of these ones, he has made the myriad out of the thousand, gathering himself back from the unfolding into deeds, back in the unity of the contemplation. Shortly speaking, the one who keeps the commandments not-transgressed, through the consummated avoiding of the sin, then he fulfills them in a consummated manner, after that he has achieved the fullest natural discernment of them, and at last he has crossed through to their consummated spiritual view, of the four myriads (forty thousand), which he has gathered through the consummated rationality of each advancement.

15. How it works the law of our nature.

16. Which is the way of working of each natural power (faculty), which for we also have received the natural powers.

17. Of course that of the godlike ones.

18. In how many sorts the general virtue is divided.

19. "Beginning" he calls the evil, because it has as beginning our contrary to the nature movement. And "not-started" he calls the good, for the good it is by nature before any age or time. "Thing that must be cogitated" he calls the good, for surely it must be cogitated, and "thing that mustn't be cogitated" he calls the evil; because one mustn't talk about it. "Thing that must be done" it is the good, because it is not-done according to the nature, but according to the grace, for the love for people, it accepts to be done by us, towards our deification – the one who do it, think about it and cogitate it; and even the good alone must be done. And "thing that mustn't be done" is the evil, the only thing that mustn't be done. "Corruptible" he calls the evil, because the nature of the evil is the corruption, as one that hasn't at all existence. And "incorruptible" it is the good, as the one which it is eternal and never ceases to exist and it is the guardian of all the ones in which it dwells. The good it is what we are looking for through our rational power (faculty), we want it through the lusting power, we guard it not-kidnapped through the power of the anger, we distinguish it through the senses, consciously, unmixed with the contrary ones, we speak it through the speaking power, highlighting it to the ones who don't know it and we multiply it through the fruitful power; better said we multiply ourselves through it.

20. Another meaning.

21. The first dispassion it is the movement of the body towards deeds, when it is not touched by the sin.

22. The second dispassion it is the total rejection of the passionate thoughts from the soul. Through it is quenched the movement of the passions from the first dispassion, by not having the passionate thoughts which to kindle it for working.

23. The third dispassion is the total stillness of the lusting part towards passions. For the sake of this one there also exists the second one, which consists of cleaning the thoughts.

24. The fourth dispassion is the total rejection also of the sensitive images from cogitation. Through it the third one

also has received its existence, by not having in itself the sensitive imagines which to give shape to the passions` icons.

25. The number thousand it is the unit, which doesn't need consummation. This is because it comprises the fullest rationality of the unities from before it, as also of itself. That's why also when it is multiplied it gives again a unit, and not a decade. When the result of multiplying the number one thousand it is a unit, like the ones who have understood the meaning of the numbers. Rightly, the trinity of the thousands it means the theological teaching about Trinity, which the one who possesses it together with the consummated virtue, he leaves the spiritual Babylon.

26. The letter "Tau" (T) it is the sign of the cross, preserving in its shape the countenance of the cross. And the "Iota" (I)<sup>436</sup>, as initial letter of the name Jesus, namely the fearsome name. "Ita" (H), as initial letter also, it expresses the firmness of the virtue. Patriarch Abraham, secretly transforming these ones in number, he boldly went out against the enemy powers, having three hundred and eighteen servants, namely the whole teaching of the theology, symbolized by tree hundred (T), the unspoken mystery of the embodiment of the Word, represented by number ten and the consummated mode of the unmoved habituation into virtue, expressed through the number eight (H)<sup>437</sup>. all of these ones the Scripture called them servants born in house, as ones which are godlike fruits according to the grace of the heart of the one who has achieved them.

27. He shows how the number three hundred expresses the consummated Providence.

28. The number one hundred it is the tenfold decade of the godlike commandments. This is because it perfectly embraces all of them through fulfilling of each one. And the consummated embracing of the godlike commandments by fulfilling each of them, it is the total and whole virtue. At its

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<sup>436</sup> In Romanian language the name Jesus it is spelled: Iisus. (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>437</sup> Only the number 8 is beyond the fickleness symbolized by 7.

turn the consummated virtue it is the knowledge, without mistake, of the truth. Therefore the mind which knows, without mistake, the truth, it has reached at one hundred plots<sup>438</sup>, like the great Abraham did, and therefore it also reckons the body mortified, namely it sees it detached from the life according to the senses, which it makes it to give birth to the living joy into ghost. This is because so it is interpreted the name Isaac. So it is proper to the Providence, not only to guard the nature in conformity with its rationality, but also to deify it, by perfectly improving the tendency of the will through virtues, on the ground of the achieved wisdom. And the nature considered together with these ones it constitutes the number three hundred.

29. The number six it is the consummated indication of the existence of the things. And the number ten it means the possibility of the happy existence of the things. Therefore, somebody, by multiplying six times ten, he obtains sixty, which it shows the factual state of the happy existence of the things.

30. Of course that of the body, of the senses and of the world.

31. Who they are, in the spiritual meaning, the Jewish servant and housemaid.

32. Coming the dispassion, which is indicated by the year seventh, the rationality and the cogitation turn back to the contemplation of the related ones, after they get rid of serving the bodily modes of the virtues<sup>439</sup>.

33. The pleasure is the activated lust, once it is a present good, according to its definition. And the lust is the not-activated pleasure, once it is a future good, according to its definition. The wrath is the intentional anger. And the anger with intention it is the wrath passed into deed. Therefore to the one who has brought into submission these powers of the rationality, the lust has become pleasure through the righteous

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<sup>438</sup> Here with the sense of pieces of land. (E. l. t.'s n.)

<sup>439</sup> The year seventh is the year of resting, of liberation from a foreign work. The cogitation comes back to contemplating the pure rationalities, after the man has achieved the dispassion.

union of the soul with God into grace, and the wrath the clean ardor which defends the pleasure which comes from the union with God and sober anger which determines the power of the will to totally come out from things in the desire of the soul after God. Consequently, until the world is alive into us through the willing affection of the soul for the material ones, we mustn't give liberty to these powers (faculties), lest, by mixing themselves with the sensitive ones, as with some kinships, to make war to the soul and to conquer it being defeated by passions, as did yesteryear the Babylonians with Egypt. This is because through the time during which the law commanded to remain the servants of another nation to their master, the Scripture indicated as good the affection of the soul for this world, or for the life from here, by indicating through the ones of the history, the spiritual ones.

34. The number seven thousands, which has here a good meaning, it means the temporary and present life, adorned with virtue and rationality. This is because the number one thousand it means the written and the natural law, according to the meaning which we presented when we have explained the myriads, together adorning the life of the one who loves God, it is proven so that the number seven thousands indicates the whole life from under the time of the one who loves God, guarded by these laws. And three hundred indicates the Providence of God, Who takes care of the existence according to the nature and of the happiness according to the grace, of the ones who are in the care of the Providence. At last, the number seven it symbolizes the dispassion in the modes of behaving. So, the one who through his natural powers, he guards his life lacked of passions, like the Providence wants, having seven thousands three hundreds and seven servants and housemaids, he come out from the confusion and from the troubling of the passions.

35. He calls end both the dispassion from here according to the deeds, and the deification from there, according to the grace.

36. "Singers" he calls those ones who through their life of deeds they herald the wills of God.

37. "Psalmists", he says, are those ones who not only fulfill the wills of God, but they also tell to others the mysteries happened within themselves.

38. The number eight comprises in itself both the stillness and the movement. The stillness, when it is considered into itself, because any even number is still, not having a center; the movements, when it is summed to the one from before itself or to the one from after itself, because then it results an odd number. This is because every odd number is mobile through itself, due to the equal distance from the extremes to the center. That's why what eight does between the numbers from under the number ten, that is done also by the number eighty between the numbers from under the number one hundred. Likewise also the number eight hundreds among the numbers placed under the number one thousand. Therefore, considered in it, it shows the standing still, but it circumscribes the movement of the one from before itself. This is because seven, seventy and seven hundreds symbolize the characteristic of temporality. Consequently, being given the fact that the ones submitted to the time and to making are noticed by the feeling (the work of the senses), it follows that also the knowledge or the science without mistake of the eternal and spiritual ones are received by the consummated mind (we understand through science the existential knowledge). And the number fifty, comprising into it and odd unit, added after multiplying the number seven with itself, indicates the end of the fulfilling of the virtues by the righteous ones. This is because isn't moving anymore towards committing the virtues the one who has reached to the Good through nature, and has received in himself the immobility. This is because the unit is the beginning and the end of any movement. And the number "five" indicates the science about these ones. This is because it comprises the rationalities of the intelligible, rational and sensitive ones, of the ones which have life and of the ones

which purely and simply<sup>440</sup> exists, rationalities comprised only by the godlike wisdom alone, which is defined as science without mistake of the truth.

39. The camels from Midian are, if Midian is interpreted as “emptying the stomach”, the representations of the things which are born and perish, and if it is interpreted as ‘clay with blood’, they are the rationalities of the Providence referring to this passing and fickle life; at last, if it is interpreted as “human sweats and of the mother” they are the rationalities of the godlike Judgment referring to the present life, which are gathered by the thoughts through cogitation and the intuition through the senses oriented towards the seen ones. Out of these ones, namely from thoughts and from intuition, it coagulates the true opinion about things, which is the fruit of the cogitation in the union with the senses. So, “the human sweats and of the mother’ are the thoughts of the cogitation produced with tiredness and with the institutions of the feeling, which gives us suck like a mother.

And the camels from Ephah are the ones which come from the possession of the back. And the back is the body, because it exists for the soul. Therefore, if we use well the possession of the body, we make it servant of the soul towards giving birth of virtues, and we do not take in consideration but the godlike rationalities of the body, for which it has been created. After that, by gathering also the rationalities of the seen ones, as some camel of Midian, we cover our Jerusalem, namely the soul, hiding it in the godlike views of the things and making it unseen and undefeated by passions.

40. The number “four hundreds” indicates the nature of the corporeal world. This is because this one is formed out of four elements. And the number “thirty five” it means the rational movement of the virtuous ones into time. This is because seven times five it gives the number thirty five. And

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<sup>440</sup> It is the ranking of the existences as it was seen by Dionysus the Areopagite. De divinis nominibus, chapter 6, III, G.P. 3, 817: οἱ νόες, τα λογικά, τά αισθητικά, τα óντα. (the laws, the logic, the aesthetics, the beings (E. l. t.'s n.))

“seven” it means the temporal movement, as ‘five’ it means the rational knowledge. Therefore by summing four hundred with thirty five you have shown the rational, natural and temporal knowledge of the holy men which life under nature and time.

41. There is a matching between the number and the counted ones. The horse nimble to running it represents through its feet the perpetual mobility and the ascension. The time that moves quickly, not taking any pause in its flowing, it represents the relentless activity of the counted ones. And this is made obvious by the round number. This is because the number six, being multiplied with itself, it give birth to itself six fold. So, the word of the Ghost has shown through horses and through their number, the nimbleness, the quickness and the relentlessness of the virtuous habit of the godlike men in a mysterious way.

42. What the mule is.

43. What the horse and the mule from the Scripture are in a reproachable meaning.

44. The one who offers to the watchers the appearance of knowledge only by repeating some stolen words, deceiving the hearing of the unwise ones, like Absalom, and defiling in the hearing of the profane ones, by forcedly possessing them, the beautiful an loving of God contemplations of the one who has taught him, like of some concubines, according to the advice of Ahithophel (which is interpreted “brother who dusts you up”, namely brother who kisses with cunningness), it is proven that suffers of vain glory and he falls in the hand of the David`s servants, in the forest covered by the variety of the natural contemplations, when he starts with boldness to fight against the superior one<sup>441</sup>. For it is proven that he doesn`t even step on the earth, as one who has the solitude of the virtue, and he hasn`t even achieved the heaven, as one who

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<sup>441</sup> II Samuel 16: 18: KJB: “18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.”; II Kings: 16: 18: ROB: “No, said Hushai to Abesalom, I follow the one whom the Lord has chosen, and this people and the whole Israel; with that one I am and with that one I remain”.

hasn't really reached at the high habit of the knowledge. That one dies, receiving three arrows into heart, which are: the mentioning of the lawlessness towards the one who has taught him, the shame for being pride of a knowledge that he hasn't it, and the waiting for the inevitable future judgment for these ones. Pricked by these arrows, the glory lover dies pricked. But Ahithophel, the evil adviser, precedes him, rightly receiving the death by hanging<sup>442</sup>, as one who has taught the children to rise up against the parents and he has seen thwarted his evil advice. For he cannot endure anymore the life after he has removed the veil from upon the false friendship towards David, and he couldn't prove that the ones who praises himself with the apparent knowledge he has the mastery of the rationality.

45. Another explanation of the same things.

46. Gilead, interpreted as "the moving of the crying", indicates the sufferance of the repentance, and interpreted as "the moving of the witness", it means the rebuking from the conscience for the mistake; at last, interpreted as 'their unveiling', in imagines the confession of the sins according to their sort. The mind, reaching at this state, which is followed by the self-appreciation due to some good, it kills this self-appreciation, born out of itself by mating with the feeling of another nation. And again, he comes back in Judaea and Jerusalem, namely to confessing the godlike mercies consequently to the virtues and to the peaceful contemplation of the things into the ghost; and after all of these to the mystical theology, as to a holy tent, in which are unveiled in a mysterious way the beauties totally unseen by others.

47. Eight is one of the number from inside the decade; eighty, from inside the hundred; eight hundreds, from inside

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<sup>442</sup> Samuel: 17: 23: KJB: "And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father."; II Kings: 17: 23: ROB: "Ahithophel though, seeing that his plan wasn't followed, he put the saddle on the donkey, left and went to his house, in his city, and he made his testament in the profit of his house, and then he hanged himself and died and he was buried in the city of his father."

the thousand; eight thousands, from inside the myriad. Seen in themselves these numbers indicate the immobility, namely a decreasing of the quantity and an increase of the intensity<sup>443</sup>. Consequently, when they are into the Scripture in a commendable meaning, the number eight shows the consummated stillness, namely the ceasing of the passions. The number forty is the icon of the sensitive things, and the number five is the icon of the senses, under which there falls the sensitive world as object of natural science. So, rightly this number indicates the fruitless of evil habit, and the consummated liberation of the godlike men from the affection of the senses towards the sensitive ones.

49. The number five is round and by multiplying it with any odd number it finds itself again. This is because by multiplying with any odd number the number five or the multiples of the number five, you will find out that the resulted number it ends also with the figure five. For instance:  $5 \times 3 = 15$ ;  $5 \times 5 = 25$ ;  $5 \times 7 = 35$ ;  $5 \times 9 = 45$ . Likewise, advancing to infinite, you will find out that five multiplied with each odd number, or fifty times fifty, or five hundred times five hundred, or five thousand times five thousands, they give the numbers in which they find themselves: I mean that they end in themselves. But this thing is proper to the circular and spherical movement. Therefore rightly the scholars in the science of the numbers they called the number five spherical and cyclical, as one which never goes out from itself, when multiplied with odd numbers. But this number also symbolizes the general science, which never goes out of itself, in the endless movement of around the whole, and it comprises everything through the power of the word.

50. The wisdom, by liberating from passions through punishments, it produces the fear, and by achieving the virtues through stirring the mind up to look at the future ones, it produces the sake for those ones.

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<sup>443</sup> Good definition of the immobility, of the resting on the superior stairs of the spiritual life and from the future life: it is not inertia, but gathering from scattering and agitation, in a unitary and intensive living.

51. The wisdom is fear to them who don't want the wisdom, giving birth to the privation through fleeing (from the ones of the life) and it is longing in the ones who love the wisdom, or habit of rejoicing themselves (of other goods).

### Question no. 56

*Again, it has been written in the second book of Ezra: "And hearing the enemies of the nation of Judah and Benyamin, they came to see what that sound of the trumpets is, and they found out that the ones from slavery are building up the Temple of the Lord God of Israel. And coming close to Zerubbabel and to Joshua and to the chiefs of the families of Israel, they spoke to them: "Let's build together with you, for to be us like you, listening to your Lord and to sacrifice to Him from the days of Esarhaddon, the King of Assyrians, who removed us here". And Zerubbabel and Joshua and the chiefs of the families told them: "We cannot build together the house of our Lord. We will build alone the house of the Lord God of Israel"<sup>444</sup>. What does it mean this and especially what the jealousy for they didn't want to build together with the ones who were worshipping the Lord God?*

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<sup>444</sup> I Ezra: 4: 1-3: KJB: "NOW when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; // Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. // But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us."; ROB: "Hearing, the enemies of Judah and Benyamin that the ones who came back from slavery are building up a temple to the Lord God of Israel, // They have come to Zerubbabel and said to him: "Let's build also us with you, because also us, as you are, we are searching for your God and to Him we bring sacrifices ever since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who brought us here". // And Zerubbabel, Joshua and the other chieftains of the tribes of Israel said to them: "Is it not appropriate to build together with us the temple or our God, but only us alone will build the temple of the Lord God of Israel, as Cyrus commanded to us, the king of the Persians."

## **Answer**

Judah it means “confession”. And the meaning of the confession it is twofold (1). There is a confession of thanksgiving for the goods received as gifts, and there is one caused by remonstrance and by rebuking for the evil deeds committed. This is because confession it is called also the enumeration of the thanksgiving for the godlike benefactions by the guilty ones. And both of them produce the humbleness, because both the one who gives thanks for the good ones and the one who is tried for lawlessness gives also thanks (2); the first one, reckoning himself unworthy for the good that have been given to him, the second one praying to receive forgiveness for mistakes. Benyamin is interpreted, according to the exact meaning of this word to Jews, “the crying of the sighing of the mother”, or “the guidance of the mother”, or “the son of the righteous mother”, or “the building of the people”.

Therefore everyone who confesses himself being in the two shown torments, it is about the tribe of Judah. And everyone who is crying for virtue, or has the righteousness as a mother, or is way towards salvation to many for the richness of the virtue and his overflowing of the teaching into word, he takes part to the tribe of Benyamin (3). So defined the Scripture the ones who liberated themselves from the slavery of the passions and leaved the affection towards the sensitive ones, and they made themselves, through the habituation with the dispassion, capable to build the house of God. And “house” I call the mind built from diverse virtues and rationalities, through doing and contemplation, to be dwelling house to God into ghost. At last, the enemies of these ones are the ones from the four nations moved in the land of Israel by Azvacafat, king of Assur. This is because these one was the first who brought in the land of Israel: Babylonians, Cuthah, Hamath and Hebrews<sup>445</sup>.

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<sup>445</sup> II Kings: 17: 24: KJB: “And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from

The Babylonians imagine the pride, being interpreted as “confuse (bewildered) nature” (4). The Hamath imagine the vain glory because it moves its cogitation from virtue to the barren self-appreciation. This is because their name interpreted it means “coming out of these ones” (5).

The Hamath imagine the will to be pleasant to people. This is because Hamath is interpreted as “the sight of the ones from outside”. Through this one are shared to others the richest gifts to the ones who cultivate the virtue in a liar way, for the sight of the people (6).

At last, the Jews imagine the deceitfulness of the hypocrisy. This is because they are interpreted as winding. They bring out from virtue the ones who listen to them, through deceitfulness and friendly hypocrisy, as the snake did first to Adam (7).

And Esarhaddon, who removed these ones in the land of Israel, it is interpreted “the one who enslaves from back side”, namely in a hidden and unnoticed way; or “the ones who enslaves in chains”. But it is proven that this is the devil, which does everything secretly, towards the overthrowing of the human nature, which he squeezes in the chains of its own sins. This one brought in the land of Israel, namely in the habituation of the knowledge and of the virtue, the pride, the vain glory, the desire of being pleasant to the people and the hypocrisy, mixing them with the ones who occupy themselves with the virtue and with the knowledge, to steal the toils of the ones who labor for achieving the good, deviating cunningly towards other things than the supreme cause, the purpose of their activity (8).

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Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.”; IV Kings: 17: 24: ROB: “Then after the king of Assyria gathered people from Babylon, from Cuthah, from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim and settled them down in the cities of Samaria in the place of the sons of Israel. These ones mastered Samaria and started to inhabit through its cities.”

Maybe just for he knew that these cunning devils follow the virtuous ones, the godlike Apostle writes to Thessalonians<sup>446</sup> that he didn't go to them "with flattering words", as a hypocrite (as maybe they believed about him), neither "with hidden impulses of greediness", wanting to be pleasant to people, nor "searching for glory from somebody", as a glory lover. This is because he didn't show any pride, being proved the characteristics of his humbleness: the countless persecutions and the sufferings with the body, the consummated poverty and the simplicity in uttering the word. "For though I am simple in the word, but not also in knowledge"<sup>447</sup>.

So, "those ones hearing the sound of the trumpets, they came to see what is with this sound and they found out that the ones escaped from slavery are building the temple of the Lord God of Israel". The trumpets, of which sound is being heard by the unclean devils, are the words about virtue and knowledge. And the sound of these words is the deeds of the virtues and the good steadfastness in the way of behaving of the ones who turned themselves through repentance from the sin to virtue, and they elevated themselves from nescience to the knowledge of God (9).

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<sup>446</sup> Thessalonians: 2: 4-6: KJB: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. // For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: // Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."; ROB: "But as we were reckoned by God worthy for being entrusted to us the Gospel, so speaking, we don't search for being pleasant to people, but to God Who tries our hearts. // For we don't ever show us with flattering words, as you know, neither with hidden impulses of greediness. God is my witness. // Neither did we search for glory from people, nor from you, neither from others, though we could have been important, as apostles of Christ."

<sup>447</sup> II Corinthians: 11: 6: KJB: "But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things."; ROB: "And if I am lacked of skills in word, not though in knowledge, but I have proven it in everything and in before all of you".

And they came to Zerubbabel and to Joshua and to the chieftains of the families, and said to them: Let's build together with you, because in the same way with you we listen to your Lord and to Him we bring sacrifice". Zerubbabel is the active mind, Joshua is the contemplative mind (10), and the chieftains of the families are the powers (the faculties) of the soul, out of which spring out the modes of the virtues and the rationalities of the knowledge. To this one come nigh the unclean devils of the pride, of the vain glory and of the will to be pleasant to the people and of the hypocrisy, saying: "Let's build up together with you the temple of the Lord". This is because no one of these cunning devils doesn't ever come against the zeal of the virtuous man, but rather removing the deficiencies of the virtues it urges the man to even greater efforts, making itself together-zealous with the ones who toil themselves, to attract the heart of the one who strives himself after he has lost the constant measure of the moderation and to bring him imperceptibly, towards other target than the one he taught going at. That's why they say cunning things: "likewise you we listen to your Lord". This is because they don't hate the righteousness and they aren't disgusted by fasting, nor by the sharing material help, or by the receiving of strangers, or by the singing of psalms, or by the readings, of by the high teachings, of by the sleeping on the floor, or by the vigil, of by everything else through which is characterized the life of God, until the purpose and the cause of the committed things serve to them. That's why the other devils are observed more quickly by the ascetic and he escapes more easily from the hurting that comes from them.

But these ones, which have the appearance of helping to the man to walk on the path of the virtues and of building together with the man the temple of the Lord, what high mind would be able to unveil them? This mind can do this only "through the alive and working word which penetrates everything and crosses through to the separation of the soul

and of the ghost”<sup>448</sup>, namely it knows which of the deeds and of the thoughts are of the soul, or natural forms and movements of the virtues, and which are spiritual or forms and movements above nature and proper to God, given to the nature through grace (11); through the word which crosses through to the separation “between joints and marrow”, by knowing the matching or the mismatch between the modes of the virtue and the spiritual rationalities (12); through the word which “judges the cogitations and the intentions of the hearts”<sup>449</sup>, namely the hidden affections of our deep towards the said ones and the unseen causes of these ones from the soul (13).

This is because “there is not before Him any hidden creature”; this it means among us, who believe that we can hide ourselves. This is “because all of them are empty and unveiled”<sup>450</sup>, not only the committed ones and the thought ones, but also the ones which will be done and which will be thought. This is because maybe about the future deeds and thoughts the Scripture says that “there is no hidden creature”, and not about the committed ones. This is because these ones are unveiled to us and to others. The more is this to God, Who knew from before all the endless ages which were, are and will be, and Who has from before by nature the knowledge of the doing of everything; and Who not out of things, but from Himself has received the existential knowledge of the things, being Him their Maker; he is the knowledge itself (*αὐτὸν γνοῖς*), as the One Who has His knowledge by nature, and above any cause. But he is even to his one above in all ways, according to a supra-finite rationality which exceeds by infinite times the

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<sup>448</sup> Hebrews: 4: 12: KJB: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”; ROB: “For the word of God is alive and working and sharper than any two edged sword, and it penetrates to the separation of the soul and of the ghost, between joints and marrow, and it is skillful to judge the feelings and the cogitations of the heart.”

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid 13.

infinity<sup>451</sup> itself (14). This is because He is also the Maker of so-called knowledge in any meaning and way, and he is not accessible to any knowledge which can be cogitated and uttered.

Who, therefore, not having this word<sup>452</sup> dwelt in the deep of the heart, would be able to escape from the hidden cunning things of the devils` hypocrisy against us and to stay by himself, totally alone, without having anything to do with them, and to build up the temple of the Lord, like Zerubbabel, like Joshua and like the chieftains of the families, who say assertively and with loud voice to the deceitful spirits of the pride, of the vain glory, of the pleasure from people and of the hypocrisy: "We won't build with you the temple of the Lord our God, but we will build alone to the Lord of Israel"? Only the one who has this word is able to know that the interference of the devils causes the corruptibility and the crumbling down of the whole building and defiles the grace and the beauty of the striving dedicated to God. This is because nobody can, by having as help to the virtue some of the mentioned devils, to build on the virtue the house of God. This is because he hasn't God a purpose in what he does, to exercise himself into virtue by looking at Him. Therefore not out of jealousy didn't accept the ones who came out from slavery the Babylonians, the Cuthah, the Hamath and the Jews to build together with them the temple of the Lord, but because they knew their snares which were being hidden in the devils` appearance of friendship, who wanted to bring to them, imperceptibly, through good, the death from the sin.

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<sup>451</sup> To be seen the parallel in the Theological Heads I. 49, in The Romanian Philokalia, volume I, p. 140. God as being is above the infinity of His energies, of which the creatures can be imparted (or can impart themselves (E. l. t. 's n.)). There is an "infinite" ranking in infinity. Infinite is the joy of the creature's meeting with God, but the increasing of this joy it never ends.

<sup>452</sup> It seems like in this whole interpretation of the place from Hebrews: 4: 12, λόγος is considered by Saint Maximos the Confessor not like "word", but like rationality, like inspiration, like penetration, like enlightenment, like lightning of the understanding, of the rationality, like whisper or like ray started from the heavenly Logos.

Let it be, therefore, that also us to be saying always to the spirits of the evilness, which shows to us in an unseen manner the countenance of the spiritual friendship and say to us: "Let's build up together with you the temple of your God": "We cannot build up together with you the house of our Lord God, but we will build up alone to the Lord of Israel". Alone in a certain regard, because once we have liberated ourselves from the spirits which have been making war to us due to the lack of the virtue and from which we have come out, we don't want that, by extolling ourselves through you excesses (15), to be pricked again and to fall the more horrible than the first time, than from the first falling there existed the hope of turning back on the ground of a forgiveness for weakness, but from the second one the coming back is impossible or very difficult, because now we are hated, because of the pride that comes to us out from the fact that we have committed, instead of the ones from the right hand, other things which are even more to the right (16). But though, not alone also in another regard, because we have the holy Angels as help to the good ones, but even more we have God, Who shows Himself into us through the deeds of the righteousness<sup>453</sup> and builds us to Himself as a holy and free of all passion temple.

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<sup>453</sup> The virtues are the first stair of our union with God, and the knowledge is the second one. Between ascesis and mystical doing there is not opposition, but continuity; in the active phase the union is not so existential and so durable, because the godlike it is only partially present, leaving room also to the creatinal. In the mystical phase the creatinal has totally made room to the godlike. Paul Hankamer (Jacob Bohme, Gestalt und Gestaltung, Bonn, Cohen, 1924) by showing that Schiller believed in the union of the man with God through the moral deed, and Eckarth and Goethe through mystique, he reckons that the first one is a union through will, and the second one through being; the first one is non-existential and passing, the second one is existential and steadfast. "This union through deed it remains always limited, somehow temporary. Through the moral deed God doesn't become existentially lived into man. He remains outside the man and above man". To Eckarth and Goethe the man is not separated anymore from God through will, but through being, through the fact that he is individuality. Here is not about deed, but is about being. No moral doing heals such a shortcoming. Only the destruction can help, the death and the resurrection, the deep secret sacrifice, which is the necessary destiny of the entire humanity. The salvation is here a supra-moral, real and existential union between the universal Spirit and person" (p. 24-25). But from this place of Saint Maximos the Confessor, and out of the ones where he says that Christ is the essence of the virtue, it results that one cannot be made a so categorical difference between the union with God through virtues and the mystical union. The union through virtues isn't only a union

## Scholia

1. The confession is of two sorts.

2. Every confession, he says humbles the soul: the first one teaching the soul that it has been straightened by grace, and the second one that it must blame itself for its mistakes into the willing sadness.

3. The one who weeps for the sins from before and has in himself in a consummated way the faith in God, Who give birth to him always towards righteousness, and him who offers his life and his rationality to be imprinted on them every virtue, he has made himself limb of the spiritual tribe of the Benyamin, showing his birth according to God as deed of the will, and not of the necessity. This is because the one who willingly wears the birth from God is “the son of the righteous mother”.

4. Through Babylonians he understands the pride, being given the fact that the pride produces a confuse cogitation. This is because the passion of the pride it consists in two nesciences. And these two nesciences getting together, give a confuse cogitation. This is because only that one is proud who ignores the godlike help and the human helplessness. Therefore the pride is the lack of knowledge of God and of man. This is because by denying the two extremes it comes to life a liar affirmation.

5. Through Cuthah he understands the vain glory. This is because the vain glory is the deviation from that purpose according to God and a directing towards another purpose than the godlike one. This is because the vain glory lover is the one who pursues the virtue for his glory and not for the one of God and who pays through his toils the empty praises from people.

6. Through Hamath he understands the desire of being pleasant to people. This is because the one who wants to be pleasant to people he takes care only of the outside behaviors

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in the sector of the will, but it also touches the being of the man. And the union through being cannot be made without the union through will.

and of flattering words, to steal the sight through the first ones, and to steal the hearing through the second ones to those ones who let themselves to be sweetened and impressed only by what they see and by what they hear, and who limit the virtue only to what it falls under the senses. Therefore, the will to be pleasant to people it is seen in showing some behaviors and saying some words which want to be honored by people as being virtuous.

7. Through Jews he understands the hypocrisy. And the hypocrisy is the pretended affection of the friendship, or the hatred covered under the appearance of the friendship, or the enmity which is shown as benevolence, or the envy which takes to itself a loving face, or the sinful disposition which deceived the onlookers by showing the images of the virtues, or a life which has the form of the virtue but not also its adornment of deeds, or the affection of a righteousness which consists only in appearance, or the image of the working philosophy which covers the hidden void of the virtuous will, or the deceitfulness with image of truth which it is cultivated by the ones who imitate the snake through the cunningness of the habits.

8. The cause of the things and of the goods of from within things is God. Therefore the one who toils himself for virtue and for knowledge and doesn't advance, on the measure of his growth in grace, in recognizing the own unworthiness, he hasn't escaped from the spirit of the pride. And the one who cultivates the good for his own glory, he honors himself more than he honors God, being pricked by the nail of the vain glory. Likewise the one who commits or follows the virtue for being watched by people, he places the human approval above the godlike one, being sick of the passion to be pleasant to people. And the one who cunningly paints his behaviors with the decency of the virtue and covers the evil disposition of the will with the seen appearance of the piousness, toward deceiving the people, he buys the virtue with the cunningness of the hypocrisy. Therefore, the spiritual Azvacafat directs the

intention of each of these ones, from the own cause towards other purposes.

9. The words of God spoken simply only by uttering, they cannot be heard for not having as voice the deeds of the ones which are spoken. And if they are uttered with voice by fulfilling the commandments, the devils are consumed by the power of this voice, and the people are building, by increasing in the deeds of the virtue, zealously, the Godlike temple of the heart.

10. Through Zerubbabel it is understood here the active mind, being given the fact that he is more warrior, and through Joshua the contemplative mind, being given that he is a priest and he has been ordered to ceaselessly pray to God.

11. The separation of the soul and of the ghost indicates the difference between the virtues by nature, of which rationalities we have them in a natural way, and the ones from the Ghost, of which grace he receive as a gift<sup>454</sup>. The difference of these ones is made clearly by the Scripture.

12. The “marrow” is the godlike word, which nourishes as some bones the godlike thoughts from within us, which at their turn sustain the body of the virtues. And the “joint” is the mode of the creature, in which it is accomplished the union of the thoughts with the Godlike rationalities, to give the whole of the virtue.

13. The “cogitations and the intentions” which he says that are judged by the word are the affectionate ties of the soul with the godlike rationalities and with the thoughts and with the causes of those ties. This is because the cogitation moves the memory, which is affection by nature, and the intention looks at the end, which is proper to the cause.

14. The existential knowledge is God. But the mind precedes in an obvious manner to any knowledge, because this one falls under the mind. Therefore God is above even to this

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<sup>454</sup> This interpretation is related to the trichotomy-ism. The soul is the nature, the ghost is the grace. Or the soul is the natural inward man, and the ghost is the inward man, namely the soul in crosses through by the grace.

knowledge, being given the fact that he is in a supra-infinite above any mind under which the knowledge falls.

15. The devils which make war to the soul in the absence of the virtue are those ones which teach to the soul the fornication and the drunkenness, the love for money and the ones alike. And the ones which make war to it due to the excess of virtue are the one who teach to the soul the self-appreciation, the vain glory and the ones alike, sneaking through the ones from the right side, secretly, the ones from the left side.

16. The definition of the virtue is the union through knowledge of the human helplessness with the godlike power. Therefore the one who closes himself into the helplessness of the nature, he hasn't reached yet at the border of the virtue. Due to this cause he commits sin, as one who hasn't received yet the power which strengthens the helplessness. And the one who daringly presents instead of the godlike power the human helplessness as power, he jumped over the fence of the virtue. He commits sin by not recognizing what has been done through him later in a supernatural way. He reckons the sin like virtue. It is more forgivable therefore the one who has closed himself into the natural helplessness, rather suffering the falling from virtue due to the laziness, than the one who presents instead of the godlike power his own helplessness as power capable to fulfill the duties. This is because rather he causes his own falling through his daring.

### Question no. 57

*“A lot is capable the working prayer of the righteous one”<sup>455</sup>. What does is mean “working”?*

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<sup>455</sup> James: 5: 16. Ένεργουμένη could be translated maybe more correctly as “worked”: a prayer worked through deeds. But worked in this way, the prayer becomes at its turn working, efficient – from a passive principle, an active factor.

## **Answer**

I know that the prayer is working in two ways. In one of them, when the ones who prays himself brings his prayer to God together with the deeds of the commandments, so when the prayer doesn't fall off the tongue as a simple word and as an empty sound of the voice, laying down lazy and without consistency, but when it is working, alive and animated through fulfilling the commandments. This is because the prayer and the request fulfill their consistency when we fill them up with virtues. This filling up makes strong the prayer of the righteous one, than he is able to do anything, by working through commandments.

In other manner it is working, when the one who needs the prayer of the righteous one commits the deeds of the prayer, straightening his life from before and making strong the request of the righteous one, because he empower it through his good behavior. This is because the prayer of the righteous one is useless to that one who having need of it, he delights himself more with the sins than with the virtues. For instance the great Samuel was crying yesteryear for Saul who committed sin, but he was unable to make God merciful, not having as help to his crying the due straightening of the sinful one. That's why God, making his servant to stop the useless crying, says to him: "For how long will you cry for Saul? I have rejected him, to not reign anymore over Israel".<sup>456</sup>

Also Jeremiah, who suffered thoroughly for the people of the Jews who was turned crazy by the deceitfulness from the devils, he is not heard when he prays, because he doesn't have as power of the prayer the turning back of the unfaithful Jews from wandering. That's why, being him stopped by God from

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<sup>456</sup> I Saul: 16: 1: KJB: "AND the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."; I Kings: 16: 1: ROB: "The Lord said to Samuel: "For how long will you weep for Saul, who I have rejected, to not be king over Israel anymore? Fill up your horn with chrism and go, for I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for among his sons I have chose king to Me"."

the useless prayer, God says to him: “And you do not pray for this people and do not ask Me anymore to have mercy on them; and do not pray and do not come to Me for them, for I won’t hear you”<sup>457</sup>.

It is truly an awful insensibility, not to say madness, to ask for salvation through the prayers of the righteous ones that one who delights his soul with the corruptible ones, and to ask for justice for the deeds with which he praise himself, by defiling himself willingly. The one who needs the prayer of the righteous one he must not let that prayer not-working and inert, if he truly hates the evil ones, by winging the prayer of the righteous one with his own virtues, so that that prayer becomes able to reach at the One Who can give forgiveness for mistakes.

Consequently it avails much the prayer of the righteous one when it is working, either through the righteous one who does it, or through the ones who asks him to do it. When it is working through the righteous one who does it, it gives him daring towards the One Who can fulfill the prayers of the righteous ones; and when it is working through the one who asks for it, it balances him from the wickedness from before, by changing his disposition towards virtue.

### Question no. 58

*“Into this one let yourselves to rejoice now a little, though you must be sad in many kinds of trials”<sup>458</sup>.*

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<sup>457</sup> Jeremiah: 7: 16: KJB: “Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.”; ROB: “But you don’t pray for this people and don’t lift up prayer and request for them, neither you mediate before Me, for I won’t hear you.”

<sup>458</sup> I Peter: 1: 6: KJB: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.”; ROB: “Into this one rejoice yourselves, though you would need now to be sad, being tried by many temptations for a short time,”

*How, being somebody sad in trials, can rejoice himself into the ones which are sad?*

### **Answer**

The word of the truth knows two kinds of sadness: one is hidden into soul, and another shown through feeling. The first one (1) comprises the whole deep of the soul, which is hit by the whip of the conscience; and the second one it stretches itself over the whole feeling, which gathers itself from its natural overflowing, under the burden of the pains (2). The fist one is a consequence of the pleasure lived with the senses, and the other one is the consequence of the joy from the soul (3)<sup>459</sup>. Better said, one is the consequence of the willing passions of the soul, and the other one is the consequence of the unwilling passions<sup>460</sup>.

This is because the sadness is, in my opinion, a disposition in which the pleasure is not present. And the lack of the pleasures is brought up by tiredness. The tiredness, at its turn, it is obviously provoked by the lack of the natural habituation, or by loosing that habituation. And the lack of the natural habituation is produced by becoming ill the power which is through itself available to the habituation. This illness of the power which is through itself available to the disposition of the habituation comes out of the bad usage of its natural work. At last, the bad usage of its work it consists in the movement of the power towards which is not appropriate to the nature and doesn't have consistency (4).

But as the Scripture knows two kinds of sadness, it also knows two kinds of temptations (5); one willingly and one unwillingly, one creator of wanted pleasures, the other one

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<sup>459</sup> The spiritual joyfulness it means a compression of the sensual pleasures, as the sensual pleasures produce sadness into soul.

<sup>460</sup> The willing passions are the sinful ones. They produce sadness to the soul. The unwilling passions are the pains, the tribulation. They produce the sadness of the senses.

causing unwilling pains<sup>461</sup>. The willing temptation gives birth to the wants pleasures, and the unwilling one brings the unwilling pains. One is the cause of the sadness from within the soul, and the other ones of the sadness according to the senses (6).

That's why I reckon that the Lord and our God, teaching His disciples how they must pray, He tells them to pray to not come that kind of the willing temptations: "And do not lead us into temptation"<sup>462</sup>, namely He teaches His disciples to pray to not be allowed to have the experience of the temptations of the pleasure, namely of the willing and craved for ones. And the great James, so called the brother of the Lord, teaching the ones who fight for truth to not avoid the kind of the unwilling temptations, he says: "Consider a great joy, my brothers, when you fall in diverse temptations"<sup>463</sup>, namely into the trials which aren't wanted and produce pains (7). And the Lord clearly shows this by adding: "Knowing that the trying of your faith works the patience and let the patience have its consummated thing, to be you consummated and whole, without any lack". "Consummated is the one who fights against

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<sup>461</sup> The unwilling temptation, which is a sufferance, a trouble, a labor, it is more appropriate to be called trying. It is a temptation too, because the sufferance also determines the man to commit sin for get rid of it. But while the temptation of the pleasure (the temptation in a narrow sense) it must be rejected, the temptation of the pain (of the trying) must be accepted. So, the attitudes towards them must be directly opposed. It would be bad when both of them would be rejected (the indifference, the apathy), but even worse it would be when to accept the temptation of the pleasure and to reject the temptation of the pain. The temptation (of the pleasure) it brings pleasure to the feeling and sadness to the soul, and the trying (of the pain) it brings sadness to the feeling and joyfulness to the soul. One cannot rejoice with the soul and in the same time to delight himself with the senses, namely you cannot receive in the same time both the temptation and the trying. Therefore the drunkenness and the delight which we feel it during a voluptuousness, though it seems to us that has penetrated the whole our being, it is only a pleasure of the senses, and not of the soul. The soul could deepen, in those moments, when we don't feel in the middle of that voluptuousness an internal sadness, as sign of the soul's presence. We have become, in other words, in those moments, entirely of the senses; in no way the voluptuousness is also of the soul.

<sup>462</sup> Matthew: 16: 13: KJB: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."; ROB: "And do not take us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Your is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever. Amen."

<sup>463</sup> James: 1: 2: KJB: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,"; ROB: "Great joy to reckon, my brothers, when you fall into diverse temptations,".

the willing temptations, through restraint, and in the unwilling ones he insists with patience (8), and “whole” is the one who accompanies the doing with the knowledge and of whose contemplation is not lacked of deeds (9)<sup>464</sup>.

Therefore the sadness and the pleasure being divided between soul and feeling, the one who searches for the pleasure of the soul, he receives the sadness of the senses and becomes tried, consummated and whole. “Tried” because he has experimented through feeling the contrary ones<sup>465</sup>; “consummated” because he has fought tirelessly against the pleasure and the sadness through the senses, through restraint and patience; “whole” because he preserves intact, steadfast and constant the habits which fight against the dispositions of the feeling which are opposed to each other; these habits are the doing and the contemplation, which remain tied to each other and undivided, the doing proving through its modes the knowledge of the contemplation, and the contemplation wearing, like the rationality, the shield of the virtue with the deed (10).

So, because the Scripture says that the sadness as also the pleasure are of two sorts and one is in the soul and the other one is in senses, let's take a short look also at their causes.

The sadness from the soul is twofold. One is for the own mistakes, another is for the foreign mistakes. And the cause of this sadness is obviously the pleasure according to the senses; of the one who becomes sad, or of the ones for whom he becomes sad (11). This is because by judging rightly, there is almost not sin into people, which to not have as beginning of its birth the irrational affection of the soul towards the pleasure of the senses (12).

And the pleasure's cause from the soul is, obviously, that sadness according to the senses of the one who rejoices

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<sup>464</sup> This is a proof that in the eastern mystique, the contemplation doesn't mean inactivity, as it was reckoned. The contemplative stage doesn't abolish the previous one.

<sup>465</sup> The ones contrary to the senses are the pains.

himself and is glad about his own virtues or of the others (13). This is because according to the right judgment, there almost isn't virtue among people, which to not have as beginning of its birth the wise turning away of the soul from the feeling (14). Gaining the soul, which it follows the virtue, this detaching from the feeling the last one will be in a necessary way in pains and in toils, not having anymore united with it the power which contrives to us the diverse pleasures on the ground of the voluntary affection of the soul for them (15). On the opposite, this power is manly rejecting now, through restraint, the rushing in of the natural pleasures of the senses. And towards the toils and the unwilling and against nature pains, which come upon itself, it remains totally unyielding, not being possible to be deviated from the godlike habituation and beauty of the virtue, from that pleasure without consistency. And it doesn't fall from the height of the virtues, in order to deviate the toils which comes upon itself; it doesn't try to spare the body from feeling the pains. And the cause of the sadness according to the senses it is the soul's total preoccupation for the ones which are conform to its nature, whilst the pleasure according to the senses it is obviously produce by the work of the soul contrary to its own nature (16), not being possible to have another beginning of its birth than the deviation of the soul from the according to its nature ones.

This is because the works according to the nature of the mind and of the senses are opposed to each other, due to the extreme difference of the ones submitted to them (17). This is because the ones submitted to the mind are the spiritual and incorporeal entities, which the mind notices them according to the being; and the ones submitted to the senses are the sensitive and corporeal things, which they perceive them also according to the nature.

Therefore, because it is not possible to the mind to penetrate to the spiritual ones related to itself, without contemplating the sensitive things, which are placed in the middle, and this one cannot be done without the work of the

senses which accompany it and which it is related to the sensitive things (18), rightly, if renounces at the appearances of the seen ones, reckoning the work of the senses which accompany it as a natural work (19), falls out of the spiritual and according to the nature ones, grabbing – so to say - with both hands the corporeal and according to the nature ones. And being carried by these one in an irrational way (due to the feeling which overcame it), the mind born by the sadness from the soul, because the soul is hit by the often whippings of the conscience, and on the other hand it produce a pleasure from feeling, fattening it with the contriving of the means for delighting the body. But if the mind, from the first touching through senses with the seen ones, it cuts off the appearance of these ones and contemplates the spiritual rationalities of the things, cleaned up of the images places on them, it produces pleasure into the soul, not being retained anymore by any of the things seen through the senses, and it gives birth to the sadness through the senses, this one being deprived of all the sensitive natural things. This is because where the senses are ruled by rationalities in contemplating the seen things, the body is deprived of all the according to the nature pleasure, not having the senses free and unchained of the rationality's chains, to serve to the pleasures<sup>466</sup> (20).

If therefore, as I've said, the sadness or the pain of the soul (because they are one and the same thing) it is produced by pleasure of feeling, and the sadness of the pain of the feeling is produced by the pleasure from the soul, rightly the one who wants it and hopes after that life "preserved in heavens towards incorruptible, righteous and not-withered inheritance, through the resurrection from dead of our God and Savior Jesus

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<sup>466</sup> So to Saint Maximos the Confessor the two pleasures, from the soul and from the feeling, cannot be together at all. Nobody can have them both in the same time. A contrary, to the pleasure from the soul it corresponds the pain from the feeling, and vice versa. The man, therefore, he must chose together with the pleasure from one of them, the pain from another. In the Greek text everywhere is mentioned the term "feeling". I've translated sometimes through "senses". It is about the work of the senses, about perception, to which there can be associated a pleasure or sadness.

Christ”<sup>467</sup>, he has in his soul a unspoken gladness and joy, ceaselessly rejoicing himself of the hope of the future goods, but he wears into body and into feeling the sadness, or the toils caused to the feeling by the diverse tribulations and the pains caused by them. This is because any virtue is accompanied by pleasure and by pain: pain to the body, which is stuck with the sweet and smooth pain, and pleasure to the soul, which delights into ghost with the rationalities cleaned of everything that falls under senses.

It is therefore appropriate that the mind, being sad in this life (because I believe the word “now” it means so) with the body for the much narrowing which come out from the trials for the virtue, to always rejoice and to be glad with the soul for the hope of the future goods, even if the feeling is pressed by pain. “Because the sufferings from now, of the soul, aren’t worthy of the future glory, which it will be unveiled to us”<sup>468</sup> says the Apostle.

In this way the man can rejoice, in my opinion, for what he is sad. This is because by becoming him sad with the body due to the toils, he rejoices himself with the soul of the same virtue, by looking at the beauty of the future ones as to something present (21). For this beauty, the ones who ceaselessly renews himself through the birth of the soul into ghost, he dies daily, likewise the great David<sup>469</sup>, by willingly renouncing to the body, having both the savior pleasure and the useful sadness (22). And through sadness we do not understand the irrational one, of the many, which presses upon the soul because the soul is deprived of pleasures or of material

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<sup>467</sup> I Peter: 1: 3: KJB: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;”; ROB: “Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His great mercy, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from dead, he has reborn us, towards alive hope,”

<sup>468</sup> Romans: 8: 18: KJB: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”; ROB: “For I reckon that the sufferings of the time present aren’t worthy of the glory which it will be unveiled to us”.

<sup>469</sup> Psalms: 44 :24: KJB; 43: 24: ROB; I Corinthians: 15: 31.

goods which stir up into man contrary impulses towards the unnecessary things (23) and make him running away from the ones of which he mustn't run (24), but the rational one and tried by the wise men into the godlike one and the one which unveils the present evil. This is because the sadness is a present evil which is within the soul when the pleasure of the feeling impedes the rationality's discernment, or into feeling when the road of the soul advances not-impeded into virtue, bringing all the more tribulations to the feeling, the more provides pleasure and joy to the soul yielded to God, through the related light of the virtue and of the knowledge.

### Scholia

1. Namely the sadness of the soul.
2. Now he calls sadness the pain of the feeling.
3. The sadness of the soul is the consequence of the pleasure of the senses, because through this one is born the sadness of the soul. Also the sadness of the body is the consequence of the pleasure of the soul, because the joy of the soul it becomes the sadness of the body<sup>470</sup>.
4. The definitions of the sadness are alternated in what concerns the cause, which produces sadness.
5. The sadness if of two sorts. One is of the feeling, being born out of the lack of bodily pleasures; and another is of the mind, being produce by the lack of the soul's goods. But also of two sorts he says that are also the temptations. Some of them are willing, others are unwilling. The willing ones are on one side the causes of the bodily pleasure of the senses, on the other side of the sadness from the soul. This is because only the committed sin saddens the soul. And the unwilling ones, which are shown in the involuntary tribulations, are the causes of the pleasure form the soul and of the bodily pain of the senses.

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<sup>470</sup> The joy of the soul is concomitant to the bodily ascesis.

6. The willing temptation produces a sadness into soul and creates the pleasure into senses; and the unwilling one gives birth to the pleasure of the soul and to the sadness of the body.

7. The Lord teaches us to pray to not reach at the wiling temptations, which produce pleasure to the body and pain to the soul. And the great James urges us to rejoice of the unwilling trials, which banish away the pleasure of the body and the pain of the soul.

8. He shows whom he calls perfect.

9. He shows whom he calls whole.

10. "Tried" is the one who has had the experience of the bodily pain and of the bodily pleasure, for he has tried the favorable side of the bodily ones. "Consummated" is the one who has overcome the pleasure and the pain of the body through the power of the rationality. And "whole" is the one who has preserved unchanged the habits of the doing and of the contemplation, through the strength of the love for the godlike ones.

11. To any sadness from the soul it precedes, he says, a pleasure of the body.

12. Without the passionate tie of the soul with the senses there is no sin into people.

13. The ones who appeases the body through the wiling toils, he rejoices the soul spiritually.

14. The virtue is born out of the willing estrangement of the soul from the body.

15. The contriving power about which he speaks is the thinking (mental) power of the soul. This one, coming out from the tie with the senses, there is no one to take care of the pleasures on the account of the soul, through a wiling affection towards it. This power doesn't occupy itself anymore with easing the pain of the body, due to the total and affectionate preoccupation of the will for the godlike ones.

16. The preoccupation of the soul with the ones according to the nature it becomes the beginning of the senses`

pain. This is because the soul, toiling for the according to the nature good ones, there is no power to contrive the means which provide pleasure to the senses.

17. To the senses are submitted the sensitive ones, and to the mind the intelligible ones. Therefore great is the difference between the sensitive ones and the intelligible ones.

18. Immediately that the mind reckons the work of the senses as its own, it entangles itself in the appearances of the sensitive things and contrives pleasures on account of the body, not being able to penetrate beyond the nature of the seen ones, being retained by the passionate tie with the senses.

19. The one who transforms the laws of the things, by imitation, into his law he is a virtuous one, by making rational the movement of the irrational ones. And the one who transforms his own law, in the laws of others, by imitation, he is an addicted one, changing the rationality in what is lacked of rationality.

20. When rationality masters within us, this one necessarily torments the body, which serves to it concerning the virtue.

21. The body if of the soul and not the soul of the body. This is because the smaller one is of the bigger one, and not the bigger one of the smaller one. Therefore because for the mistake of the first one is sprang into us the law of the sin, which is the pleasure of the senses, and because of this one it has been decided the death of the body through toils and pains, ordered towards the abolishment of the sin's law, the one who knows that death emerged due to the sin from within his body, towards its abolishment, he always rejoices into his soul when he sees how is abolished the sin's law from within his own body through the diverse toils and pains, to receive the happy future life into ghost. This is because he knows that he cannot reach at that future life if isn't emptied before, as of a vessel, even from this life, the sin's law, sustained through the affection of the will towards it.

22. The savior pleasure is the pleasure of the soul for virtue. And the useful sadness is the pain of the body for the sake of the virtue.

23. The one who is without passions and without things, he doesn't bring his impulses towards the inappropriate ones.

24. The ones who doesn't receive the happenings which separate him from passions and from things, he runs away from the ones of which he shouldn't.

### **Question no. 59**

*For this salvation searched insistently and thoroughly studied the Prophets who prophesied about the grace destined to you, by studying which and in what kind of time is that grace shown to them by the ghost of Christ from within them, which confessed to them about the passions of Christ and about the glories after them<sup>471</sup>. If the blessed Prophets left to us in writing the ones which sounded in their ears from the Ghost, to be us searching them, how and with which searching and study they searched for them and studied them, once it sounded into ears and they wrote about the things unveiled to them?*

### **Answer**

The power of searching for and studying the godlike things are planted into the humans` nature, existentially, by the Maker, by their bringing to existence itself. And of the unveilings of the godlike things you are imparted through grace by the power of the Most Holy Ghost. Being given though that the cunning one nailed down these powers consequently to the sin, even from the beginning the nature of the seen ones "and there was nobody to understand and to search for God"<sup>472</sup>, because all of the ones who had the human nature they had

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<sup>471</sup> I Peter: 1: 10-13.

<sup>472</sup> Psalms: 13: 2; 52: 3 (LXX).

limited the power of their mind ands of their rationality to the appearance of the sensitive things and had not any understanding for the ones from above senses, rightly the grace of the Holy Ghost reestablished the power of the ones who didn't embraced the straying with their intentions and with their whole heart, by detaching it from the material ones. Therefore, by receiving it back cleaned through grace, these ones first they searched and studied, and then they insistently searched for and studied the godlike mysteries through the same grace of God.

This is because it is not allowed to us to say that only the grace by itself works into Saints in knowing the mysteries, without the powers which receive the knowledge by nature (1). This is because then we reckon that the holy Prophets didn't understand the enlightenments given to them b y the Most Holy Ghost. But in this case how could be true the word which says: "The wise man understands the ones from his mouth"<sup>473</sup>? On the other hand they didn't receive the true knowledge of the things neither by searching for it only through the power of the nature, without the grace of the Holy Ghost. This is because then it would be proven useless the dwelling of the Holy Ghost into Saints, not helping them with anything in discovering the truth. And how could be true anymore the word which says: "All the good giving and all the consummated gift is from above, descending from the Father of the lights"<sup>474</sup>; or : "To each one it has been given the showing of the Ghost towards profit; for to one, he says, it has been given through the Ghost through word of wisdom, to another word of knowledge through the same Ghost, to another, the gift of healings", etc. Then he adds: "All of them are worked by one and the same Ghost, sharing to each

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<sup>473</sup> Proverbs: 16: 25: KJB: "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth"; ROB: "Gather wisdom, gain understanding! Do not forget them and do not go away from the words of my mouth!"

<sup>474</sup> James: 1: 17: KJB: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."; ROB: "All the good giving and all the consummated gift is from above, descending from the Father of the lights, to Whom there is no change or shadow of moving".

one usually as He wishes”<sup>475</sup>. And He wants what is useful to each one, to fulfil the non-passionate sake of the ones who search for the godlike ones. This is because the ones who search without the godlike ones, of course they will take what they are searching for (2). And the ones who searches for with some passion, he won’t receive what he is searching for, because he is searching in a bad way. For it is said: “You ask and you do not receive, because you are asking in a bad way”<sup>476</sup>.

Consequently the grace of the Holy Ghost doesn’t work the wisdom without the mind which to receive that wisdom; neither the knowledge, without that rationality capable of it; neither the faith, without the conviction of the mind and of the rationality about the future ones and not-shown for the time being; nor the gifts of the healings, without that according to the nature love for people; nor some other gift from the others, without the habituation and the power capable of each one. But again, the man won’t achieve some of the listed ones only through the natural power, without the power of God, which to give them (3).

And this is limpidly shown by all the Saints, who, after they have been found worthy of the godlike unveilings, they search for the rationalities of the unveiled ones<sup>477</sup>. Thus, Abraham, receiving the promise that he will inherit the land, promise shown to him through the words which God tells to him: “I am the Lord Who brought you out from the land of Chaldeans, to give this land to you towards inheritance”, he isn’t pleased to receive what he has been searching for when he came out from the land of Chaldeans, but he searched for with sake to find out also the way in which he will inherit, by saying towards God: “Master Lord, through what will I know that I will

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<sup>475</sup> I Corinthians: 2: 7-11.

<sup>476</sup> James: 4: 5: KJB: “Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?”; ROB: “Or it seems to you that the Scripture speaks vainly? The Ghost, Who dwells into us, does He urge us towards envy?”

<sup>477</sup> Daniel: 12: 8; Zachariah: 4: 5.

inherit it?”<sup>478</sup> And Moses, receiving the power of the signs and of the wonders, he searched for learning the modes and the rationalities through which to prove the worthiness of being believed of the given signs<sup>479</sup>. And the great David says: “And He put also into them all the rationalities of His signs and of His wonders, in the land of Ham”<sup>480</sup>. And the same one says about himself, shouting out towards God: “Unveil my eyes and I will understand the wonders from Your law”<sup>481</sup>. And them: “Torch to my feet is Your law and the light of my paths”<sup>482</sup>. And the great Daniel, who wanted so strongly the godlike views, for which he staid hungry for three weeks, while searching their rationalities, he hears an Angel saying to another Angel: “Interpret to the one from there the vision”<sup>483</sup>. At last, the great Prophet Zachariah at each vision from his prophecy he presents the Angel who was speaking within him, showing to him and teaching him the rationalities of the visions, saying: “And the Angel showed himself to me, who speaks into me: Lord, what are these ones?”<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Genesis: 15: 7: KJB: “And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.”; ROB: “And He said again: “I am the Lord, Who brought you out from the Ur of the Chaldeans, to give to you this land as inheritance.”

<sup>479</sup> Exodus: 4: 1: KJB: “And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.”; ROB: “And answering, Moses said: “But if they won’t believe me and they won’t listen to my voice, but they will tell me: “The Lord didn’t show Himself to you!”, what to tell them?”

<sup>480</sup> Psalms: 105: 27: KJB: “They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.”; 104: 26: ROB: “He places into them the words of His signs and wonders, in the land of Ham.”

<sup>481</sup> Psalms: 119: 18: KJB: “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”; 118: 18: ROB: “Open my eyes and I will know the wonders from Your law.”

<sup>482</sup> Psalms: 119: 105: KJB: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”; 118: 105: ROB: “Torch to my feet is Your law and light to my paths.”

<sup>483</sup> Daniel: 8: 16: KJB: “And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.”; ROB: “Then I heard voice of man above the Ulai River, voice which shouted and said: “Gabriel, interpret the vision to the one from over there”.

<sup>484</sup> Zachariah: 1: 9 (LXX): ROB: “Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be.”; ROB: “And I said: “Who are these ones, my Lord?” And then the Angel who was speaking to me he answered me: “I will show you now who these ones are.”

It is limpid out of this one that all the Saints on one hand they received from the Ghost the gift of unveiling, and on the other hand they asked for being clarified to them the rationalities of the unveiled ones. Also that the grace of the Ghost doesn't abolish at all the power of the nature, but rather, being weakened by using it in a contrary to nature way, he makes it again strong by using it in an according to the nature way, elevating it to the understanding of the godlike ones.

Of course the Holy Ghost is the One Who searches for and tries into us the knowledge of the things. But he doesn't search for Himself what he is searching for, because he is God and above any knowledge, but for us who need knowledge. As also the word becoming body, he doesn't commit the mystery of the embodiment for Himself, but for us. But as without a body mentally animated the Word wouldn't have worked in a godlike way the ones of the body, likewise the Holy Ghost doesn't work into Saints the knowledge of the mysteries, without the according to the nature power, which searches for and studies the knowledge. Therefore whether they searched for, or whether they insistently searched for, whether they studied or whether they studied thoroughly, the Saints had the grace of the Ghost, which moved their mental and rational power towards searching and studying the ones concerning the salvation of the soul. Without the Ghost, they weren't seeing anything of the spiritual ones; this is because the human mind cannot understand without the godlike light, the godlike and the spiritual ones.

This is because like the eye cannot perceive the sensitive ones without the sunlight, likewise without the spiritual light the human mind couldn't receive ever any godlike vision. The first one lightens the sense of the sight by nature towards perceiving the bodies (4), and the second one lightens the mind towards contemplation for understanding the ones from above senses (59).

And the salvation of the “souls” it is the end of the faith. The end of the faith is the true unveiling of the believed One. And the true unveiling of the believed One is the unspoken penetration (perichoresis) of the believed One into the one who believes, according to the measure of the each one’s faith. This penetration, at its turn, it is the final turning of the ones who believe to proper principle, which is the fulfilling of the desire (69). The fulfilling of the desire it is the always noble resting<sup>485</sup>, of the ones who are full of desire, around the desired One. And the always noble resting of the ones full of desire, around the desired One, it is the eternal an uninterrupted joy of the desired One. The eternal and the uninterrupted joy it is the impartation of the godlike goods from above nature<sup>486</sup>. And the impartation of the godlike goods from above nature it is the like the ones who are imparted. The resemblance of the ones who are imparted to the One of Who they are imparted, it means the actualized identity through resemblance of the ones who are imparted to the One of Whom they are imparted, as much as it

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<sup>485</sup> ή ἀεικίνητος στάις (or an inactive stage (E. l. t.’s n.)). For explaining this eternal state is to be seen The Romanian Philokalia, volume II, p. 203, footnote 1. Gregory of Nyssa, asked to himself the question: how can be the same thing both state and movement? And he answered: “the more somebody remains more firmly and more unmoved into good, the more he advances on the road of the virtue. This is because the unsure one and the slipping one to its thoughts, without a firm steadfastness into good, engulfed by storm and carried in all sides, as the Apostle says, he doesn’t advance towards the height of the virtue. For instance the ones who step on sand, even they look like crossing long spaces with their feet, they are vainly toiling themselves, their step sliding downwards due to the sand. They make the movement, but their movement doesn’t make any progress. But if somebody else, as the Prophet says, by getting his feet out from the slippery depth, he leans himself on stone, and the stone is Christ, the consummated virtue), the more he comes more firm and more unmoved, according to the advice of Paul, the quicker he crossed along the road using the stability (στάσις (stasis (E. l. t.’s n.))) as some wing, which wings him for the trip upwards through the steadfastness in good” (Vita Moysis, G.P. 44, 405 C. D.). As Saint Gregory synthesizes the movement and the stability into the consummated one, who continue to become even more perfect, like to Saint Maximos the eternal resting, they aren’t a stiffness. Though they are seeing the desired One, His infinity makes them never finish in loving Him and in knowing Him, but eternally desiring to know and love Him the more.

<sup>486</sup> “The joy, says Saint Maximos, doesn’t have anything opposed, neither a past, nor a future. This is because the joy doesn’t know either past sadness, or doesn’t wait fearfully for the future saturation (boredom) (Ambigua G.P. 91, 1088). If it is so, the true joyfulness, which cannot be but the eternal joyfulness, cannot be compared to the created and limited goods, but only to the godlike goods, which never end, which make the ones who is partaker to them to get out of time.

is possible. And the actualized identity through resemblance of the ones who are imparted to the One of Whom they are imparted it is the deification of the ones who are found worthy of deification. The deification, to say it shortly, it is the concentration of all the times and of all the ages and of all the ones from time and from age. And the concentration and the end of the times and ages and of the ones from within them, it is the undivided union of the true and proper beginning in the saved ones (7). The undivided union of the beginning and of the true end into the saved ones it is the good exit from the natural ones of the existentially limited ones between beginning and end. And the good exit from the natural ones<sup>487</sup> of the ones limited between beginning and end, it is a all-vigorous and supra-powerful work, unmediated and infinite of God, Who work infinitely in the ones worthy of the good exit from the natural ones (8). At last, this unmediated, all-vigorous and supra-powerful work of God, Who works infinitely, it is a mysterious pleasure and joy, and a supra-secret one, of the ones mastered by it, on the ground of a unspoken and above understanding union; a joyfulness on the measure of it there cannot be found mind or rationality, understanding or word in the world of the created ones<sup>488</sup>.

This is because the nature doesn't possess the rationalities from above nature, neither the laws of the contrary to nature ones. Above nature we call the godlike and not-understood pleasure, which God provides it to the creature, by uniting Himself according to the grace with the worthy ones. And contrary to the nature is the unspoken pain which is born from the lack of this pleasure, which God provides it to the nature, by uniting Himself outside the grace with the unworthy ones. This is because God, by uniting Himself with everybody,

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<sup>487</sup> The exit from the natural ones (η κρείττων τῶν κατὰ φύσιν εκβασίς (the nature's creatures by their nature (E. l. t.'s n.))) isn't an exit downwardly, a leaving of the natural powers, but an overcoming of their highest stage.

<sup>488</sup> Until God is within the creature only as beginning, the creature contributes with its work for developing the gift received as beginning. But when God has made Himself creature, namely the beginning has united Himself with the end, there doesn't anymore work but God.

according to the quality of the disposition existing in each one, He gives to everyone, as He knows, the appropriate feeling, as everyone has prepared through himself towards receiving the One Who will unite Himself with all of us at the end of the time (9)<sup>489</sup>.

Therefore I reckon that through the “salvation of the souls” as end of the faith<sup>490</sup>, the coryphée of the Apostles, Peter, he understands the embracing by the ones from above nature. “For this salvation, of course through the Holy Ghost, the Prophets searched insistently and they studied thoroughly, which and what kind of image is the one shown to them by the Ghost of Christ dwelling within them and about the glories from after them”. Therefore the ones who insistently searches for the rationalities and the spiritual bridges of this salvation, they are advised to understanding by the Holy Ghost, Who doesn’t let to remain within them the unmoved and not-working power through which they can search insistently for the godlike ones.

Firstly, he teaches them to “search for” the killing of the will from the sin or of the sin from (through) will; and the resurrection of the will into (through) virtue or of the virtue into (through) will. Also to “study” the way of killing of the will from the sin, or of the sin from (through) the will; likewise the rationalities of the resurrection of the will (through) virtue and of the virtue (through) will (10). This is because through these modes and rationalities it uses to be done the killing of the sin from (through) will, or of the will from sin, as also the resurrection of the virtue from (through) will, or of the will in (through) the virtue. This is because they have in a obvious way, as part in this age (which the Scripture has called it “time”), the passions of Christ or for Christ around the nature, passions confessed to them by the Holy Ghost, to plant

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<sup>489</sup> Any creature must reach at a ceasing of its natural work (the Saturday) and to a dwelling within it of the exclusive work of God; the good creature by developing to the upper limit of its possibilities, and the bad creature through the total corruption of its natural powers.

<sup>490</sup> I Peter: 1: 9: KJB: “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”; ROB: “Gaining the reward of your faith, the salvation of the souls.”

themselves into Christ into the resemblance of His death through killing the sin, but also in the resemblance of the resurrection, by working the virtues (11).

This is because it is due that the one who wants to save himself to kill not only the sin through the will<sup>491</sup>, but also the will itself for the sin (towards the sin)<sup>492</sup> and to resurrect not only the will for the virtue<sup>493</sup>, but the virtue itself for the will<sup>494</sup>. This is because the entire killed will to be separated from the killed sin, insomuch than not to feel it anymore, and the entire resurrected will to feel the entire resurrected virtue through a undivided union (12).

“Searching for” this one firstly, the Holy Fathers, through the Holy Ghost, they have gained the working philosophy. After this, becoming they clean and free from any defilement, they moved their mental eye of the soul towards the final target of the creatures through the same Ghost, “searching for with insistence”, after the resurrection of the will, and the not-brightness of the nature, and “thoroughly studying” the modes and the rationalities that godlike immortality<sup>495</sup>. This is because they weren’t “searching for” the resurrection of the will, which they already received it through moral doing from the Ghost, as also they weren’t “studying” also its modes, but

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<sup>491</sup> Τη προαιρέσει νεκρώσαι την ἀμαρτίαν (You have chocked her to not sin) E. l. t.'s n.). It is the same with the killing of the sin or through will (την κατά την προαιρέσιν την ἀμαρτίασ νέκρωσιν (the preaching of sin's abomination (E. l. t.'s n.))

<sup>492</sup> Άλλα και αυτην την προαιρέσιν τη ἀμαρτία (but this is also the preaching of sin (E. l. t.'s n.)). It is the same with killing the will through the sin (την κατα την αμαρτίαν τεν προαιρέσεως νέκρωσιν (the sin of choosing death (E. l. t.'s n.)). It is a parallel to the expression of Paul: “I have crucified myself to the world (I have killed my will for of of sin) and the world has crucified itself to me (I have killed the sin for or of the will)”.

<sup>493</sup> Αναστησαι τη αρετη την προαιρέσιν (You restore the advancement of the virtue (E. l. t.'s n.)). It is the same with the resurrection of the will in or through virtue (την κατά την αρετην της προαιρέσειος αναβίωσιν (in it's virtue revival (E. l. t.'s n.)).

<sup>494</sup> Τη προαιρέσει την αρετεν (she chooses her (E. l. t.'s n.)). It is the same with the resurrection of the virtue in or through will (κατα την προαιρέσιν την αρετης αναβίωσιν (in preference to the virtue revival (E. l. t.'s n.)).

<sup>495</sup> The ascesis, and the moral doing, they resurrect the will. The ulterior stage, the gnosis or the deification, which it follows after ceasing of the moral activity, it resurrects also the nature into incorruptibility and immortality. Until the will it is not consolidated into the not-changeability into good, neither the nature can achieve the not-changeability. Between ascesis and mystic there is a necessary continuity.

they were now “searching for insistently” the incorruptibility of the nature, which they didn’t have, and they were “searching for thoroughly” the modes and the rationalities of its deification. Towards this they had now their entire haste, wanting its glory into Christ, as they suffered together with Him in this age (which, as I said, the Scripture called it “time”), so to be they glorified together with Him into the future age, becoming into an above nature way, inheritors of God according to the grace and together-inheritors with Christ according to oikonomia, through the power of the embodiment of the One Who has achieved the whole nature.

This is because Christ being God and man according to the nature, like God we inherit Him according to the grace and above nature, through that unspoken participation. And like man Who has assumed us, making Himself in our image for us, He also inherits Himself together with us, due to his not-understood descent. This One being desired before, by the Saints, in a secret way into ghost, they learnt that to that glory into Christ, which will be shown in the future following to the virtue, it must precede in the present time the sufferings into Him for the virtue. This is because they “studied, he says, which and what sort of time it is the one shown to them by the Ghost of Christ from within them, Who was confessing before the sufferings into Christ”.

So they were “searching for insistently” and “studied thoroughly” not only the incorruptibility of the nature and the rationalities of its deification, but also the time in which the trying will come through suffering for its sake, to make obvious both the disposition of the ones who truly want it, and the intention of the ones who want it hypocritically; and then also the time, namely the other age, in which it will be shown present and actualized the deification according to the grace, which will make everybody into the godlike resemblance, on the measure on which everyone is capable for receiving it. Maybe this it has been called, by the Scripture, the “glory” which will follow to the toils for the virtue.

These things must be said to the one who would say: why the Scripture didn't say here "searching for" and "studying", but "insistently searching for" and "thoroughly studying"? Answering like this, it will be clearly shown their closest meaning. But I know also another meaning of them, which I have heard it from a certain wise man. That one was saying, by telling a more secret thing about "searching for" and "insistently searching for the origin (beginning) and of the final target (the end). Namely, he was saying about "searching for" that it is used in a natural manner for origin and the "insistently searching for" it is used for the final target. This is because in a natural way nobody "will search insistently for "his origin, as nobody will "search for" the final target in a natural manner. But the origin is "searched for", and the final target is "insistently searched for". But, he was saying, since the man threw through disobedience, immediately that he started to exist, behind himself his own origin, he was unable anymore to "search for" what was searched for after him. And because the origin circumscribes in a natural manner the movement of the ones started from it, it is also a final target, into which it search for its end the movement of the ones which are in movement.

Therefore the man "insistently searching for" his final target he find his origin, which is in a natural manner in his final target. This is because by leaving the "searching for" his origin, he has undertaken through nature the "insistently searching for" of it as final target. This is because it was impossible to escape from its border, which surround him from all quarters, and circumscribe his movement. So, as I said, he couldn't "search for" the origin which has reached behind himself, but he must "insistently search for" the final target which is before him, to find out through the final target the deserted origin, after he hasn't known the final target from origin.

Maybe this is also what the wise Solomon tries to teach us when he says: "What is what it was? It is what it will be itself. And what is what was done? It is what it will be done

itself". Through this he wisely shows somehow the origin from the target, because there is now shown anymore after the transgression of the commandment the final target from the origin, but the origin from the final target; neither is there somebody "searching for" the rationalities of the origin, but "insistently searches for" the ones which lead the ones who are in movement towards the final target.

But somebody could say that for many times the word "searching" in the Scripture it has not this meaning with certitude. For instance it is said: "Search for the peace and pursue it"<sup>496</sup>, or: "Search firstly for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness"<sup>497</sup>. But that one can find even in these places, if he watches at them attentively, the strengthening of what we have said. This is because the scripture by saying: "Search for the peace and pursue it", through this it has given the advice to be pursued the origin in the final target; and the "Kingdom", which is the origin, it has commanded to us to be "insistently searched for" through straightening, which is the final target of the Kingdom. This is because the Kingdom of God is before all "righteousness", or better said it is the righteousness itself, towards which it tends, as towards the final target, the whole movement of the one who strives himself. This is because the righteousness it means to give equally to each one according to the worthiness; and the Kingdom is the defence according to the law. Therefore the righteousness is the same thing with the Kingdom. Through it, as through the final target, the ones who want they can easily go towards Kingdom, as towards origin. This is because the righteousness it worked (actualized) Kingdom, and the Kingdom, is the righteousness supported through deeds. This is because defending the creatures according to the law it means to give to each of them the due

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<sup>496</sup> Psalms: 34: 14: KJB: "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."; 33: 13: ROB: "Shun yourself of evil, and do good, search for the peace and pursue it."

<sup>497</sup> Matthew: 6: 3: KJB: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."; ROB: "Search first for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all of these will be added to you".

ones according to his worthiness. And to give the appropriate ones with its worthiness it is the same thing with defending the existences according to the law. Consequently, no difference in word shakes the accord between the meanings of the Holy Scripture for the ones who wisely understand the godlike ones.

And if somebody would want to understand the “searching for” also in another manner (13), or the “searching for insistently” and the “searching for thoroughly”, he will find out that both the “searching for” and the “searching for insistently” refers to the mind, and the “searching for” and the “searching for thoroughly” to the rationality. This is because in a natural way the mind is the one which “searches” and the rationality “studies” by nature. The “searching for” is, to give a definition, a simple movement accompanied by desire, which the mind does it towards something that can be known; and the “searching for” it is a simple distinction and accompanied by an intention, which the rationality does it concerning something that can be known. The “searching for insistently” it is the movement penetrated by knowledge and science and accompanied by a desire of a certain quality or size, which the mind does it as something that can be known; and the “searching for thoroughly” it is the distinction between deeds which the rationality does it concerning something that can be known, being the rationality driven by an intention of a certain quality or size. By applying these definitions to the godlike ones, we say about the “searching for” that it is the prime and simple and accompanied by desire movement of the mind towards its own cause, and the “studying” is the prime and simple distinction that the rationality does it concerning its own cause, being the rationality driven by a certain intention. The “searching for insistently” it is again the movement penetrated by knowledge and science, that the mind does it towards its own cause, driven by a fiery desire. And the “studying thoroughly” it is the distinction, which the rationality does it in what regards the virtues, concerning its own cause, driven by a considerate and wise intention (14).

So, also the Saint Prophets, “searching for insistently” and “studying thoroughly” the ones concerning the mind of the soul, they were driven towards God by an ardent and fiery movement, of the mind, penetrated by science and knowledge, and they made with the rationality wise distinctions while they were fulfilling the godlike commandments. And the ones who imitate them, they likewise insistently search for, with knowledge and science, the salvation of the soul, and they study thoroughly, with consideration and wisdom, the distinctions from the godlike deeds.

### Scholia

1. Neither the godlike grace produces the enlightenments of the cognizance, if there isn't somebody able to receive the enlightenment through the natural power, nor the capacity of this one for receiving produces the enlightenment of the conscience, without the grace which to give it.

2. The one who asks without passion, he receives the grace for working the virtues through deeds: the one who searches for in a dispassionate way, he finds out the truth from the things through the natural contemplation; and the one who knocks in a dispassionate way to the door of the knowledge he will enter unimpeded to the hidden grace of the mystical theology (the secret knowledge about God)<sup>498</sup>.

3. The mind is the organ of the wisdom; the rationality is of the organ of the knowledge; the entrustment (the conviction) if both of them, is the organ of the faith, that is sustained by both of them; the natural love for people it is the organ of the gifts of healings. This is because every godlike organ has within us, as power or disposition, an organ corresponding and capable of that gift. Thus the one who has cleaned his mind of any sensitive hallucination, he receives wisdom; the one who has made his rationality master over the innate affects, namely over anger and lust, he receives

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<sup>498</sup> The three stairs of the spiritual ascension.

knowledge; the one who has in mind and in rationality a unshaken entrustment regarding God, he receives the faith which can everything; and the one who has reached at the natural love for people, after total removal of the sinful love for the self, he receives the gifts of the healings.

4. It is about the sensitive light.

5. It's about the spiritual light.

6. Of course, of the ones who move themselves towards God.

7. The fact of the existence<sup>499</sup> presents God as natural origin (beginning), and the tendency after the happy existence<sup>500</sup> it shows God as final target (end) towards Whom willingly tends everything that is penetrated by the desire to build itself again in God. The unity of these ones stays in the happy existence<sup>501</sup> come through grace. This one shows God, Who is by nature above any beginning and above any end, making the ones who have according to the nature a beginning and an end, to be according to the grace, without beginning and without end.

8. The qualitative transformation according to the grace, to the deification, it is the exit from the ones which are naturally bordered between beginning and end<sup>502</sup>.

9. Secret word about the future judgment.

10. Firstly, the pious one “searches for” killing the sin for the will and the will for the sin. After the consummated mortification of these ones, he “searches for” the life of the will into virtue and of the virtue into the will; then he ‘studies’ how and in what way he must give life to each one of these out from the other one. The “searching for” is, to give a definition, the desiring of a desired thing, and the “studying” is the searching for the mode of fulfilling the desire after the desired thing.

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<sup>499</sup> The rationality of the existence.

<sup>500</sup> The rationality of the happy existence.

<sup>501</sup> The rationality of the happy existence.

<sup>502</sup> The ones who are elevated above time, they must have the feeling that they are without beginning, that what is within them it hasn't an end, and that they are without an end.

11. The one who has killed the desire of the sin, he has united himself with Christ into the resemblance of death, and the one who has resurrected his will for righteousness, he has united himself with Him also into the resemblance of His resurrection.

12. The sin and the will by killing one for each other, they achieve a twofold insensibility one to each other. And the righteousness and the will by having the life one into each other, they achieve a twofold sensibility one towards each other.

13. Another meaning of these ones.

14. The mind by moving without knowing, towards the cause of the things, only through desire, it only “searches for”; and the rationality by scrutinizing the true rationalities from within things, in a diverse manner, it “studies” them.

### **Question no. 60**

*“As of an undefiled and not-soiled lamb, Who is Christ, known before the foundation of the world, but shown in the latter times for us”<sup>503</sup>. By who is known before?*

### **Answer**

Through the mystery of Christ the Scripture`s word named Christ Himself. This is limpidly confessed by the great Apostle, by saying: “The secret hidden from nations, it has been unveiled now”, from where it can be seen that according to him the mystery of Christ it is the same with Christ. And this mystery is, of course, the unspoken and not-understood union of the godhead with the humanity in a sole hypostasis. This union gathers the humanity together with the godhead in all

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<sup>503</sup> I Peter: 1: 19-20: KJB: “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: // Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;”; ROB: “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a without blemish and without spot lamb, // Who was know from before the foundation of the world, but Who showed Himself, in the latest years, for you.”

ways in the rationality of the hypostasis and makes out of both of them a sole composed hypostasis, without causing any diminishing of their existential difference according to their natures. In this way it is done, as I said, a sole hypostasis of them, but though the difference of the natures remains untouched, which it causes that also after the union, to be preserved undiminished their integrity according to the nature, though they are united. This is because where through union there hasn't been produced any change or alteration in the ones which has been united, there it has been remained untouched the existential rationality of each one according to the ones which have been united. And where the existential rationality has remained untouched also after the union, there have remained unharmed also the natures, not losing any of them its own characteristics.

Because it was due to the Maker of everything, that by making Himself through nature, according to the oikonomia, what he wasn't before, to preserve Himself unchanged, both as he was according to the nature<sup>504</sup>, and also as he has become through nature<sup>505</sup> according to the oikonomia. This is because there cannot be cogitated to God any change<sup>506</sup>, as there cannot be cogitated a movement above all, which alone to make possible the changing to everything that moves<sup>507</sup>. This is the

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<sup>504</sup> κατα φύσιν (by their nature (E. l. t.'s n.)).

<sup>505</sup> φύσει (natural ((E. l. t.'s n.))). There is a difference between φύσει and κατα φύσιν. The Son of God hasn't become man "according to the nature", but He has become man "through nature", namely, truly taking a human nature, not only apparently.

<sup>506</sup> This is a very interesting deduction of the lack of alteration of the human nature into Christ; the Hypostasis of Christ it is a undivided whole. And this hypostasis being godlike, it cannot change in anything of what it has. Consequently, neither the human nature, become part of the Godlike Word, cannot come out from its definition.

<sup>507</sup> The movement is taken here in a bad meaning, as exit of a nature from its own normality. This sinful meaning of the movement we have seen that it is known also to Saint Gregory of Nyssa (Vita Moysis, G.P. 44, 405 D). Maybe only this beginning of the movement it is reckoned as beginning of the sin also by Evagrius of Pont, and not the movement in general, as Hans Urs von Balthasar reckons it (Die gnostischen Centuries, p. 118). For instance, about these two groups of movements Evagrius speaks in Centuria II, chapter 72 (Gnostic Heads): "Who cogitated the first separation and who knew the first movement (it is the separation of Adam from God and his movement towards sin, translator's note) and how the rational being through their toils (the good movement, translator's note) they turn back at their inheritance. (Frankenberg, p. 179).

great and the hidden secret. This is the happy target (the end) for which everything has been founded. This is the godlike purpose, thought before the beginning of the things, which defining it, we can say that it is the final target thought before, for which exists everything, and this final target doesn't exist for some of the things. Watching towards this final target, God has brought to existence the beings of the things. This truly is the end of the Providence and of the providential ones, when is will be gathered back into God the ones made by Him. This is the mystery which circumscribes all the ages and unveils the supra-infinite advice of God, which exists for infinite times infinite before ages. And herald (Angel) of it has made Himself the existential Word of God Himself, become man. This is because this One has unveiled, if it is permitted to us to say so, the most inner deep of the parental kindness, and He has shown into Himself the end for which the creatures has received the beginning of the existence. This is because for Christ of for the mystery of Christ, all the ages and the ones from within ages have received the beginning of the existence and the end into Christ. This is because even from before the ages was cogitated and ordered the union of the border (the definite one) and of the borderless (the indefinite one), or the measure and of the lack of measure, of the edge and of the edgeless, of the Creator and of the creature, of the stability and of the movement<sup>508</sup> (1). And this mystery has been done into

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<sup>508</sup> This idea is expressed by Saint Maximos the Confessor also in the Gnostic Heads: 1: 66-67. Commenting these Heads Hans Urs von Balthasar (cited work p. 135) said: "The embodiment of Lord is the center, the meaning and the purpose of the world, and even more, the death and the resurrection of Christ are only the concrete form of the universal law in general, even making an abstraction of sin. Of course, Maximos doesn't exclude the sin – therefore he isn't a direct witness for the Scot-ist theory of the embodiment – but shapes the law of the embodiment according to the law of the nature, and this is even composed in the godlike advice regarding that one". (The Romanian Philokalia, volume II, p. 148-149). In this place Saint Maximos the Confessor says that not only the sin of Adam, but even the constitution of the world, as it has emerged from the thought and the creator act of God, guide the world towards Christ. In Gnostic Heads 66-67, it has been said that all the created ones have been founded towards Christ, because all of them ask themselves after the cross, tomb and resurrection. Now he says that this foundation towards Christ stays in that that all the created ones ask themselves after the union with the uncreated one, fact started through the embodiment of the Word of God. Related to this conception we mention here that Serge, the

Christ, Who showed Himself in the last times, bringing through this mystery the fulfilling of the decision of God from before. This is because everything that moves according to the nature to find its rest around that One Who is according to the nature totally still, from their movement towards themselves and towards each other; Also to receive through experience the lived knowledge of that One in Whom it has been found worthy to rest, knowledge which offers to them the happy possession, unchanged and constant of that One known by them.

This is because the Scripture has a twofold knowledge of the godlike ones. One is relative and it consists only of reasoning and in meanings, not having the feeling experienced

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formal Patriarch of Moscow, in an epistle taking attitude against the teachings of Serge Bulgakov, he declared as wrong the affirmation of this one that: "God created the world having in sight the embodiment of the Son of God". He literally said: "According to the Bulgakov's conception, on the opposite, the embodiment of the Son of God isn't a simple accident (Zufälligkeit) in the plan of the world, but "God created the world just for the embodiment" ("Orient and Occident" Review, Neue Folge, Erstes Heft, Marz 1936, p. 5). Without defending the Bulgakov's conception in its ensemble, it is obvious that his phrase from above it is more in accord with Saint Maximos the Confessor than the phrase of Patriarch Serge. This is the more true as Bulgakov doesn't exclude the causality of the sin from the embodiment of the Son of God. (See in the same place, p. 19, where Bulgakov quotes from his "The Lamb of God", Russian edition, Paris, Ymca Press, 363-438, the following phrases: "The embodiment of God has been fulfilled in its whole importance and expanse as it was decided from eternity into the advice of God; it has been though fulfilled for the fallen humanity; after this falling the embodiment it has become before all a means for salvation and redemption, but it has maintained the whole plenitude of its importance also beyond the redemption, because it does not exhaust itself in the last one".

It seems that according to Saint Maximos the Confessor the problem must be solved in the sense that even without the sin the world was predestined to an embodiment of the Logos into it, to a death and to a resurrection of the humanity of the Logos and of the world into Him. But the sin gave to this embodiment the character of extreme kenosis, to the cross the bloody and expiator character, and to the resurrection the character of victory upon death. Without the sin there would have been an embodiment, a cross and a mystical resurrection, in the sense that also the created as such (even reached at dispassion) must look within itself at God in a fuller way (embodiment), to rest itself from its activities and features (death) and to resurrect to an activity which is exclusively godlike (deification). The Logos wish His humanity would have been our forerunner on this road. Therefore the mystery of Christ was ordered from ever and the world was created with a constitution corresponding to this mystery, but the sin has shaped in a new manner the fulfilling of this mystery. But beyond the redeemer sense imposed by the sin, His embodiment, death and resurrection, have also in the mystical meaning, and in this sense they must be repeated by any creature. (We disagree with the consideration that the sin modifies the plan of God and appears as an accident, because such an affirmation denies the omniscience of God, as he would have not known that Adam will commit sin and this fact surprised Him (E. l. t.'s n.))

through living of that known One. Through this knowledge we guide ourselves through this world. The other one is in the proper meaning true and it consists only of the lived experience, being outside reasoning and meanings and providing the whole feeling of that known One by participating to Him according to the grace (2). Through this we will receive in the future life the deification from above nature, which will be worked ceaselessly. The relative knowledge, comprised into reasoning and into meanings, it moves the desire towards the knowledge lived through participation (3). And the live one, which obtains the feeling of the known One through participation and through experience, it removes the knowledge comprised into reasoning and into meanings.

This is because it is impossible – the wise men say – to exist in the same time with the experiencing of God also the reasoning regarding him; or in the same time with the feeling of God, the understanding regarding Him. This is because the reasoning about God I understand knowledge through analogy, brought out from the contemplation of the things; through feeling, the experience through participation, of the things from above nature (4). At last, through understanding, the simple and unitary knowledge about Him, sprung out from things. But maybe these ones have value related to any other thing, if the experiencing of a certain thing stops the reasoning concerning itself and if the feeling of that thing gives rest to the striving for understanding that thing. This is because I call experiencing the lived knowledge (*κατ ενέργειαν* (by action (E. l. t.'s n.)), which emerges after the ceasing of any reasoning and feeling I call the participation itself to the known thing, feeling which it emerges after ceasing of any understanding. Maybe these things wants to tell us mysteriously the great Apostle when he says: “As about prophecies, they would be abolished; as about the gift of the tongues, it will cease; as about knowledge, it will come to an end”<sup>509</sup>. He speaks, of course, about the knowledge which is in reasoning and in meanings.

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<sup>509</sup> I Corinthians: 13: 8: KJB: “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they

This mystery was known before all ages by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. By the Father as the One Who deigned it, by the Son as the One Who fulfilled it, and by the Holy Ghost as the One Who together-worked. This is because it isn't the (separate)<sup>510</sup> knowledge of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, once one is also Their being and Their power. This is because the Father wouldn't have ignored the embodiment of the Son, as wouldn't have done it either the Holy Ghost. This is because in the whole Son, Who have been fulfilling the mystery of our salvation through embodiment, there was the whole Father according to the being, not embodying Himself, but deigning to the Son to embody Himself, and also in the Son there was the whole Holy Ghost according to the being, not embodying Himself, but together-working with the Son to the unspoken embodiment for us.

So, whether somebody says Christ, whether he says the mystery of the Christ, the sole Holy Trinity has its prescience according to the being; in other word only the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And let nobody ask himself with bewilderment, how comes that Christ, being One of the Holy Trinity, he is foreknown by the Trinity. This is because Christ was foreknown not like God, but like man, namely His embodiment according to the oikonomia for the man, This is because the One Who is eternally existent, out of the eternally existent One above cause and rationality, is never foreknown. This is because foreknown are only those ones which have a beginning of their existence being them caused. Therefore Christ was foreknown not like he was according to the nature as He Himself is, but like he showed Himself later by making Himself man out of oikonomia for us.

For it was truly due that the One Who is according to the nature the maker of the things` being, to become also the

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shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”; ROB: “Love never falls. As about prophecies – they will be abolished; the gift of the tongues will cease; the science will come to an end.”

<sup>510</sup> E. l. t.'s n.

Author of the deification according to the grace of the created ones, for in this way the Giver of the existence to show Himself also like the Giver of the eternal happiness of the existence. So being given that no one of the creatures does know itself or any other things like they are according to their being, rightly there is no creature not to be lacked according to the nature also of the prescience of the ones to come. Only God, Who is above the ones that are, knows Himself like He is according to His being and knows all the ones created by Him like there are before they exist. And He will even give according to the grace also to the creatures the knowledge about themselves, as also the reciprocal knowledge what they are according to the being, and he will unveil to them their rationalities which are into Him in a unitary way before their making.

Some people say that Christ was known before the foundation of the world, by the ones to whom he showed Himself in the latter times, because they also existed before the foundation of the world, together with that Christ known from before. But we don't accept this teaching, because it is totally stranger from the truth, as one which makes the being of the rational ones co-eternal to God<sup>511</sup>. This is because it isn't possible to be somebody with Christ like He is and then to be no more with Him, if in Him reach the ages at their end and into Him are stopped the ones being in movement. This is because into Him no creature is submitted anymore to the changing<sup>512</sup>.

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<sup>511</sup> It's being rejected the theory of the preexistence.

<sup>512</sup> In this meaning the mystery of Christ circumscribes all the ages or all of them have been created for this mystery. All the ones are gathered together again into God according to the grace. But God, the One in Whom all the ones are gathered together again, is Christ, the embodied Logos. And through this one, through the fact that God, the One into Whom all things "come to an end", he is also man; the identity of the human being is provided for ever. Wonderful is this mystery. This mystery it makes possible the closest union of the human nature with the godlike one, though assuring its changing. And we have seen before that this not-changeability doesn't mean only an alteration into evil, but also an exit from its borders upwardly, because the human nature is the nature of God – the Word and this thing doesn't change anything of His. But through this it is assured also the not-changeability of our deified nature. Much less can be altered into evil a human nature united with Christ. Through this it

And “undefiled” the word of the Scripture called Christ, and “unsoiled”, like One Who was by nature totally free, both with the soul and with the body, by the corruption of the sin. This is because His soul didn’t have the defilement of the evilness, neither His body had the filth of the sin.

### Scholia

1. The border that comprises it is the edge of the ones which are bordered by nature. And the measure is the circumscribing of the universal quantity and the end of the ages and of the temporary natures. The edge is the circumscribing of the bordered ones into their existence from a beginning to an end. And the creature is the hypostasis got out from the ones which aren’t. The union of these ones, according to the hypostasis, through Providence, with the One through Whom these ones have been done, was cogitated from before. This one, to be on one hand preserved the existence of the things according to the being as it was due, and on the other hand to receive a subsistence (a support) or a mode to be according to the godlike grace, proving the whole state of not-changeability through the union with God.

2. The knowledge, he says, it is twofold. One stays in reasoning and in meanings about God, not having the feeling of the cogitated ones through a presence of their face. The other one is the one through living, the sole that has the possession of the truths, through the presence of their face, without reasoning and meanings.

3. Being given the fact that the rationality indicated through knowledge a thing that can be known, it moves the desire of the ones who are moved by rationality towards the possession of the indicated thing.

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is rejected the theory of the preexistence, according to which the souls have preexisted to God and then, due to the sin, they have been sent into bodies.

4. The knowledge through rationality it precedes to any experience. This is because the possession of the thing is given only through experience.

### **Question no. 61**

*"This is because it is the time to commence the judgment from the house of God. And if it starts firstly from us, which would be the end of the ones who don't listen to the Gospel of God? And if the righteous one barely saves himself, where will be shown the faithless one and the sinner?"<sup>513</sup> What does it mean: "The time is to commence the judgment from the house of God?" Or: "if the righteous one barely saves himself?"*

### **Answer**

God, Who built the human nature, he didn't create together with it neither the pleasure or the pain from the feeling (from the senses), but He gave to the mind a certain capacity of pleasure, through which the human creature to be able to rejoice secretly of Him. This capacity (which is the natural desire of the mind towards God), being stuck by the first man to the feeling immediately that he was created, the man saw his pleasure moving against nature, towards the sensitive things, through the mediation of the senses (1). But the One Who takes care of our salvation he stuck in a providential manner in this pleasure, as means of punishment, the pain, through which it has been build into the nature of the body the law of death, to limit the madness of the mind, which also moves, against nature, the desire towards the sensitive things (2).

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<sup>513</sup> I Peter: 4: 17: KJB: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"; ROB: "For it is the time to commence the judgment from the house of God; and if it starts firstly from us, which will be the end of the ones who don't listen to the Gospel of God?"

Thus, due to the pleasure against the rationality, which has penetrated into the nature, it has penetrated, as an antidote, also the pain according to the rationality. This one is mediated by many sufferings, among which there is also death, and it has the purpose of removing the pleasure which is against nature, and even to abolish it totally, to be shown the gift of the godlike pleasure in mind (3). This is because the whole pain, by having the deed of a pleasure which precedes it as cause of its birth, it is a debt that must be paid in a natural manner, in the virtue of the causality, all the ones who are partakers to the human nature. This is because the pleasure against nature it is in a natural manner followed by pain in all the ones of whom birth has been anticipated by the law of the pleasure without cause. And without cause I call the pleasure of the first mistake, because it wasn't the consequence of a preceding pain.

Therefore after the falling all the people had in a natural way the pleasure as anticipation of their coming into the world and no one of them was free of the passionate birth out of pleasure. That's why all of them were paying in a natural manner the pains as a debt and as a duty they endured death from them, and there was no way to escape for the ones daily tyrannized by the unjustified pleasure (4) and dominated in a natural manner by the justified pains and by the all-justified death from them<sup>514</sup>. This is because for abolishing the all-undue pleasure it were necessary the all-due pains after it which pathetically tore apart the man (who had the beginning of his creation in the corruptibility of the pleasure and the end in the corruption of death). And for the straightening of the nature which was suffering, there had to be invented a pain in the same time undue and not-caused; not-caused (blameless) through the fact of not having the pleasure as anticipation of the birth and undue through the fact of not being the consequence of a passionate life. This is because the all-undue

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<sup>514</sup> It may be translated also like: unjust pleasure and right pain or death; or the undue pleasure and the due pain and death.

pain and the all-undue death, being placed in the middle, between the undue pleasure and the all-undue death, to totally abolish the all-undue origin of the nature from pleasure and its all-due end through death, caused by that origin. And in this way to be the mankind made again free of pleasure and of pain, the nature regaining the limpidity from the beginning, not being defiled anymore by the characteristics which penetrated in the nature of the ones submitted to the happiness and to the corruption (5).

For this reason the Word of God, being consummated God according to the nature, He makes Himself a consummated man, consisting of mental soul and suffering body according to the nature, like us, except the sin, not having at all that pleasure sprung out from disobedience, as anticipation of His birth in time, out of woman, but impropriating, due to His love for people, willingly, the pain after that birth, which is the end of the nature (6). And He did this for, by unjustly suffering, to abolish our origin from the undue pleasure, which was tyrannizing our nature; this is because the death of the Lord wasn't a paid debt for this origin from pleasure, as to the other people, but rather a power opposite to this origin. Also to remove the due end of the nature through death, because this one (7) had not into Him as cause the lawless pleasure, due to which it penetrated (this end into the nature) and, which was punished through this end rightly<sup>515</sup>.

This is because the Lord being wise, right and powerful according to the nature, it was due that wisely not to ignore the mode of the healing, that rightly to not do forcedly the salvation of that man willingly dominated by the sin, and as almighty to not show Himself as weak in bringing the healing to its accomplishment.

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<sup>515</sup> The pain and the death generally are a flux meant to wash up the beginning out of sin of the nature, which defiles its entire existence. But to the ordinary man they don't succeed to remove this mud. To Jesus though, this flux does not smash into the wall of an own passionate origin. That's why to Him this flux passé beyond His person, cleaning with impetuosity the origin out of sin of the ones who are partakers to His human nature and therefore removing also the death which results out from this origin.

He showed His wisdom in the mode of the healing, by making Himself man without any change or diminishment. The scales of the justice he showed it in the greatness of the descent, by willingly taking our damnation in the suffering<sup>516</sup> feature of His nature and by making out of this feature a weapon towards the abolishment of the sin and of death consequent to the sin, namely of the pleasure and of the pain after that pleasure. This is because in the suffering feature (8) there staid the power of the sin and of the death, namely the forcedly reigning of the sin through pleasure and the domination of the death through pain. It is obvious that in the suffering characteristic of the nature there staid the power of the pleasure and of the pain. This is because by wanting to escape from the tormenting feeling of the pain, we seek refuge into pleasure, trying to comfort our nature tortured by the torments of the pain. But by rushing to blunt the thrusts of the pain through pleasure we strengthen even more the charter of that pain against us, not being able to reach at a pleasure liberated from pain and from toils (9).

And the strength of the all-overwhelming power he showed it by giving to the nature the not-changeability through all the contrary ones suffered by Him (10). This is because by giving to the nature through sufferings the dispassion, through toils the resting and through death the eternal life, he has restored it again, renewing through his deprivation the habits of the nature and giving to it through His embodiment the above nature grace, namely the godhead.

So God made Himself true man and gave to the nature another origin for a second birth, origin which carries the nature through toil and pain towards the future pleasure<sup>517</sup>. This is because the proto-parent Adam, by transgressing the

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<sup>516</sup> To παθητόν (the sufferings (E. l. t.'s n.). The best translation would be: the suffering mode; because it is a mode which influences the entire nature. It is an "existential" category in the sense of Heidegger's philosophy.

<sup>517</sup> As the first origin, the pleasure of the bodily mating, was driving the nature, through perpetuating the love of pleasure, towards pain, corruption and death, so the new origin, of the grace, urging the nature to pains and toils opposite to the pleasure, it leads the nature towards the pleasure of the true life.

godlike commandment, he gave to the nature another origin than the first one, consisting of pleasure, but ending in the death through pain; and he contrived, at the advice of the snake, a pleasure, which wasn't the consequence of a pain from before, but rather led to pain. Through this he brought, rightly, all the ones born out of him according to the body, together with himself, to the end of the death through pain, due to their unjust origin out of pleasure. But likewise the Lord, making Himself man and giving another origin to the nature, for a second birth out of the Holy Ghost, and receiving Adam's out of pain due death, become in Him all-undue, because He had not as origin of His birth the all-due pleasure consequent to the disobedience of the proto-parent, he bought the abolishment of both extremes: of the origin and of the end of the human creature according to the image of Adam, as ones which weren't given from the beginning by God. And so He made all the rebirth ones in Him, free of the guilt which weighted upon them. Consequently these ones haven't anymore from Adam the pleasure of the birth, but they preserved due to Adam the pain which works death within them, not as a debt for sin, but as means against the sin, according to a wise ordering out of a natural necessity (11). And when death hasn't anymore the pleasure as mother, who gives birth to it and whom it mustn't punish, it becomes obvious the cause of the eternal life<sup>518</sup>. Thus, as the Adam's life out of pleasure became the mother of the death and of the corruption, likewise the death of the Lord for Adam (for he was free of the Adam's pleasure), it becomes the birth giver of the eternal life<sup>519</sup>.

Therefore I reckon that the Scripture has discerned the things well, by showing how the provenance of Adam from pleasure, by putting its forcedly seal over nature, it gave this

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<sup>518</sup> The death being in Greek language of a masculine gender (Θάνατος (death (E. l. t.'s n.))) and the pleasure being of feminine gender, the Greek text permits the wordplay: when death has not anymore the pleasure as mother, it becomes father of the eternal life.

<sup>519</sup> The Adam's "life" is cause of common death. The "death" of the Lord is reason of common and eternal life. This is because the "life" of Adam was a false life, a consumption of the true life through the worm of the pleasure. And "death" of the Lord it doesn't mean a killing of the life, but of the worm which was chewing the true core of the life.

one to death which emerged due to it, and how the birth of the Lord according to the body led to the abolishment of both of them, namely of the Adam's pleasure and of the Adam's punishment. This is because it wasn't possible to be given at the end to the corruption through death, the One Who came on world untouched by the origin through which death emerged as end (12). But if it is so, according to this difference, until mastered forcedly over the nature, in what concern the beginning and the end, namely the birth and the corruption, only the Adam's corrupt things, there wasn't the time to begin the judgment for the full condemnation of the sin. But when the Word of God showed Himself into body and made Himself consummated man, except the sin, bearing through nature, but with His will, in the body of Adam only the punishment, and he condemned the sin into body, suffering without blemish, the right One for the right ones, and He overthrown the purpose of the death, by transforming it condemnation of the sin from condemnation of the nature, it has come the time to begin the judgment for condemning the sin through overthrowing the purpose of the death.

But let me clarify this thing even better: the sin by deceiving Adam at the beginning, it convinced Adam to transgress the godlike commandment. Through this, by giving existence to the pleasure, and through the pleasure dwelling itself in the deep itself (the bosom) of the nature, it condemned to death the entire nature, pushing through man the whole nature of the created ones towards disintegration through death (13). This is because this thing was planned by the cunning devil, the sower of the sin and the father of the evilness, which through pride estranged itself from the godlike glory, and out of envy on us and also on God, it brought Adam out of Paradise: to destroy the things of God and to scatter the ones brought to existence. This is because the sin has envy not only on us for the glory which we receive from God due to the virtue, but also on God for the most-praised power which He has in our view because of the salvation (14).

So the entire nature is mastered by death due to the falling. And the motif of the mastery it was the pleasure, which, taking its beginning out of a disobedience, it maintains itself along the whole chain of natural births. Due to this pleasure was death brought as damnation over the nature. But the Lord, making Himself man and not receiving as anticipation of His birth the undue pleasure, for which it was brought over the nature the due damnation of the death, but accepting with the will the death in the suffering feature of the nature, namely enduring death, he has overthrown the meaning (the use) of death, death not having anymore in Him the purpose of damnation of the nature, but of the sin. This is because it was impossible that in the One Who didn't take His birth from pleasure to the death damnation of the nature. Consequently into Him death had the purpose to abolish the sin of the proto-parent, due to which mastered over all nature the fear of death.

This is because in Adam the death was a condemnation of the nature, because the nature took as origin of its birth the pleasure, rightly the death in Christ has become a condemnation of the sin, the nature regaining into Christ an origin free of pleasure. Thus, like in Adam the sin out of pleasure condemned the nature to corruptibility through death and while the sin mastered it was the time during which the nature was condemned to death for the sin, likewise into Christ was right that the nature to condemn the sin through death and to be the time to start being condemned the sin to death, for the righteousness achieved by the nature, which totally rejected into Christ the birth out of pleasure, through which the damnation of death spread over everybody with necessity as a debt. So the same death, in Adam is a condemnation of the nature consequently to Adam's sin, and into Christ a condemnation of the sin consequently to the righteousness. This is because the one who suffers death as a damnation of the nature consequently to his sin, he rightly suffers it. But the one who doesn't suffer death consequently to his sin, he willingly receives the death brought into the world by the sin

towards the abolishment of the sin, giving it rather from oikonomia to the nature as a grace for condemning the sin.

Therefore like due to Adam, who founded through disobedience the law of the birth out of pleasure and consequently the death as condemnation of the nature, all the ones who had existence out of Adam, according to the law of the birth out of pleasure, they necessarily and unwillingly had, virtually united with the birth, also the death as damnation of the nature and then was the time during which the nature was condemned through sin, because then mastered over the nature the law of the birth out of pleasure, likewise due to Christ, Who has totally plucked out of nature the law of the birth out of pleasure and consequently the purpose of the death as condemnation of the nature, by willingly receiving death as condemnation of the sin, all the ones who were reborn with their will out of Christ through the bath of the rebirth into ghost and who rejected through grace the birth from before through pleasure out of Adam and who guard the grace of not committing sins since the Baptism and the undiminished and undefiled power of the mysterious adoption into ghost, through the law of the evangelical commandments, they have within themselves as it is due, the death (the use of death) which is worked towards the condemnation of the sin<sup>520</sup>. They lived during the time when the sin into body is condemned through grace. And this condemnation takes place in general according to the nature, for the great mystery of humanization, even since the time of the embodiment; and especially, after the leaving through grace, since the time when everyone receives through

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<sup>520</sup> Adam's death, as also the death of Christ aren't only some final events which end the earthly life of the man, but an active power, which kill slowly, the first one killing the nature, the second one killing the sin. Each one of these two deaths it is given as power, the one out of Adam into the birth out of pleasure, and the one into Christ (we believe that here, Father Professor PhD Academician Dumitru Stăniloae, he refers himself to the death into Christ one the people, and not that into Christ there would be death (E. l. t.'s n.)) into that adoption according to the grace. And each of these deaths passes from potency into the actual reality, being worked the first one through continuing the living into pleasure, and the second one through fulfilling the commandments. Better said, the second death isn't another death, but the first one, the one of the nature, it suffers a change of the use, of its purpose.

Baptism the grace of the adoption. Through this grace, voluntarily worked (actualized) by fulfilling the commandments<sup>521</sup>, having at the beginning only the birth into ghost, everyone, through many sufferings, suffers death (the use of death) towards the condemnation of the sin (5).

This is because the one who has been baptized and receives the Baptism, strengthening it through fulfilling the commandments, he doesn't pay death as a debt for the sin, but he accepts the use of death as condemnation of the sin, which mysteriously pass him to the godlike and endless life. This is because the Saints, who has crossed the way of the life from here by passing through many sufferings, which they bore with manhood for truth and justice, they liberated the nature from within them from the death as condemnation for the sin, and the weapon of the death, which was used to destroying the nature, they used it towards destroying the sin, according to the example of the Chieftain of their salvation, Jesus. This is because if the sin used the death as a weapon for destroying the nature in the ones who were committing the sin like Adam, the more the nature will use the death, as a weapon towards destroying the sin, into the ones who commit the justice through faith.

Therefore, when the mystery of the embodiment was done and God the embodied One totally abolished the birth of the nature according to the pleasure in the ones born with their ghost out of Him, "the time has come to begin the judgment from the house of God", namely to be condemned the sin, starting to be condemned through sufferings from the ones who believe and have know the truth and have killed through Baptism the birth out of pleasure. This is because these ones were called by Peter "the house of God", like the godlike Apostle confesses, by saying: "And Christ into His house, of Whom house we are"<sup>522</sup>. But also Peter himself, the coryphée of the

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<sup>521</sup> See this idea at Saint Mark the Ascetic, About Baptism, The Romanian Philokalia, volume I.

<sup>522</sup> Hebrews: 3: 6: KJB: "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we

Apostles, he shows this through the following word: "And if (starts) first from us (namely the judgment), which will be the end of the ones who don't listen to the Gospel of God?" It is like we would say: "If us, who have been found worthy to become, by the grace of the Lord, the house of the Lord through Ghost, are indebted to show such a great patience in the sufferings for the righteousness towards the condemnation of the sin and to gladly receive the reproachable death as some malefactors, even we are good, "which will be the end of the ones who don't listen to the word of the Gospel?" In other words, which will be the end, or the judgment, of the ones who not only keep with their entire zeal, alive and working into the body and into the soul, in their leaning of the will and into nature, their birth out of Adam through pleasure, which masters over the nature, but they don't either receive God and the Father of the embodied Son, Who calls us, or even the Mediator and the Son Himself, Who has willingly accepted with the will of Father, death for us, to reconcile us with the Father? And he did this to glorify us for Himself consequently to His deed, enlightening us with the beauty of His own godhead as much as He has received to be dishonored for us, through our sufferings. For this I reckon that is the "Gospel of God": messenger and advice of God towards the people, sent through His Son, Who embodied Himself and gave as reward of the reconciliation with the Father, to the ones who listen to him, the unborn deification (or uncreated) (16).

Because of this the great Apostle cries for the ones who, disobedient in what they fallow, by saying: "And if the righteous one barely saves himself, where will be shown the faithless one and the sinner?" "Righteous" he calls the faithful one and the ones who preserves the grace given to him at Baptism, by guarding through many sufferings not-plucked out of him the

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hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.", ROB: "And Christ was faithful as Son over His house. And His house we are, but only if he keep to the end with steadfastness, the daring of the confessing and the praise of our hope."

adoption through the Ghost. And “salvation”, the full grace of the deification, which God will give to the worthy ones and will be received barely by the one who insists with his whole power into the godlike ones; at last, “faithless” and “sinner” he calls the one who is stranger to the grace of the Gospel; “faithless” for the faithlessness in Christ, and “sinner”, for the old creature, which is maintained alive within him through the corruption of the passions. Or maybe the Scripture called “faithless” the one that is totally lacked only of the knowledge into Christ, and “sinner” the ones who believes, but he transgresses the evangelical commandments, which keep clean the shirt of the incorruptibility gained through the Holy Baptism. The place of these ones, of the faithless and of the sinner, it is not known to the ones who cultivate, even barely, the secret knowledge. This is because the word “where”, it indicates, of course, a place, which is not lacked of spatial circumscribing (17). To the place of these ones, the place of the righteous one differs through that that it is not shown through the word “where”, because the righteous has received God Himself through grace, as place above “where”, as it was promised to him. This is because God is not “somewhere”, but in an absolute way beyond any “where” and in Him it is the dwelling place of anybody who was saved, as it was written: “Be You to me defending God and fortified place, to save me”. And every one who won’t impart himself from Him, for receiving out of the relation with Him the happiness (18), he will be like a limb of the body, totally lacked of the life giver work of the soul.

Or again, once God will be the uncircumscribed place, not-distanced<sup>523</sup> and endless, of all the ones who will be saved, by making Himself to each one on the measure of the sufferings accompanied by knowledge which that man endured here for

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<sup>523</sup> Αδιάστατος (non-dimensional (E. l. t.’s n.)). It can be translated also: without intervals. Between God and the saved man there won’t be any interval; or the saved man reached into God, he increases in Him like in a continuous place, without intervals, not having to do any jumps, or to interrupt his increasing. On one hand the life in God is a rest, not having anymore to change the “place”, by passing from a place to another, or from a thing to another; on the other hand it is an eternal advancement.

justice, as it is shown the soul into the limbs of the body, working within them according to the own capacity of each limb and tying them together to be able to exist and sustain the life “where will be shown the faithless one and the sinner one”, who are lacked of this grace? This is because the one who cannot receive God within himself to work in him the happiness, where will he appear, once he has fallen from that godlike life from above ages, above place and above time?

Therefore, if we remain to the first meaning, to the affirmative one, the faithless and the sinner who will be shown “somewhere”, he won’t be at all free of circumscribed life, by not having that life free of any circumscribing and beyond any place. And if we receive the second meaning, the negative one, it is the case to ask ourselves where the faithless and the sinner will be shown, once they won’t be able to receive God, Who embraces the whole happy life and Who will be the place of all the righteous ones? If they don’t have God Himself as place, how will they be in the dwelling place and in the establishment of the happiness from God? And simply speaking, if the righteous saves on himself with much difficulty, what will be made of the one who has no thought about faith and no virtue in the life from here? (19).

### Scholia

1. The pleasure and the pain haven’t been created, he says, in the same time with the nature of the body, but the transgression of the commandment contrived the first one, towards the corruption of the will, and the second one has brought it as condemnation towards the disintegration of the nature, because the pleasure to be working the willing death of the soul due to the sin, and the pain to cause, through disintegration, the destruction of the form of the body.

2. God has given, through Providence, to the nature the unwilling pain, and death consequently to that pain, towards the punishing of the willing pleasure.

3. The willing searching for the toils and the suffering of the unwilling ones, they abolish the pleasure, stopping its actual movement. But they don't pluck off its power, that has dwelled like a law against nature in order of the birth. This is because the philosophy which cultivates virtue produces the dispassion of the will, but not of the nature. And through the dispassion of the will it comes to dwell in the mind the grace of the godlike pleasure.

4. The undue pleasure is the law of the sin, which has been built into the nature consequently to the Adam's mistake.

5. The toil and the death of the Lord were the means through which He abolished the extremes, because His birth was free of pleasure, and the death of His godlike body fights for us, being clean of passionate life. Suffering for us with the body the birth and the willing death, He has made Himself to us a mean that has abolished our birth out of pleasure and the death consequent to the passionate life and he has moved us to another life, free of any temporal beginning and free of end, which is created not by the nature, but by the grace.

6. It was impossible that our nature submitted to the willing pleasure and to the unwilling pain to be brought back again to the life from the beginning, if God wouldn't have made Himself man, by receiving willingly, for punishing the voluntary pleasure of the nature, the pain which wasn't anticipated by the birth out of pleasure. In this way, he has liberated the nature from the condemnation of the birth, by receiving a birth that had not its beginning into pleasure.

7. The end through death of the Lord.

8. It is understood the suffering characteristic of the nature.

9. How we increase even more the natural punishment of the pain, by forcing us to gather it through pleasure.

10. The wisdom of God is shown out of the fact that he makes Himself true man through nature, the righteousness in the fact that, he takes through birth the suffering characteristic of the nature like us, and the power into the fact that he

prepares to the nature through sufferings and death also an eternal life and a unchanged dispassion.

11. The Lord, by plucking off from the ones born into Him the pleasure started from the law of the sin and through this abolishing the birth according to the body, he allows them to receive death, which was before towards the condemnation of the nature, and now is towards the condemnation of the sin.

12. The nature of the people had after falling, as beginning of the existence, the conceiving out of seed united with pleasure, and as end the death through corruption united with pain. The Lord though, not having such a beginning of the birth according to the body, he wasn't submitted according to the nature either to the end, namely to death.

13. The devil, wanting to turn the nature of the created ones into nonexistence, it fought to determine the man to transgress the godlike commandment.

14. The devil, envying God and us, and cunningly convincing the man that he is envied by God, it determined the man to transgress the commandment. It envied God to not be shown in fact (actualized) His most-praised power, which deifies the man; and it envied the man, to no reach to be partaker to the godlike glory through virtue.

15. The general condemnation of the law which mastered over the nature after falling it is the true embodiment of God; and the special condemnation of the law if the rebirth of each man through will.

16. The unborn deification it is the conscious light of the deification into the worthy ones, which has no beginning, but only a not-understood showing.

17. How the word "where" must be understood.

18. The one who won't achieve the clean godlike life, the uncircumscribed around one, he won't be free of pain, because he will permanently have the born life which will circumscribe his existence or will limit it, but not the life unborn and the free of any placing into space and of all movement into time, which cannot be comprised and that's why neither circumscribe. This

is because the godlike and not-understood life, though it give joy to the ones who are imparted of if according to the grace, it cannot be comprised. It remains always not-comprised, even to the ones who posses it through participation, because as unborn it is also infinite by nature.

19. God through one and the same endless powerful will of the kindness, He will comprise all the angels and people, either good or bad. But not all of these will be imparted in the same manner of God, Who is in all of them in an unforced way (*ἀοξέτως* (regardless (E. l. t.'s n.))), in conformity with the nature, and they have made it able to receive in actual manner the rationalities of the nature, according to the whole rationality of the eternal happiness, they are imparted, for their consenting to the godlike will, entirely of kindness, through the godlike life with lights within them as into angels, or as into people. And the ones who have made in every aspect their will not-conform to the nature, by transforming it in scattering factor of the rationalities of the nature, in opposition to the rationality of the happiness, they will fall down from the whole godlike kindness due to the division of their will from the godlike will, by making friendship with a wicked existence. By doing this, these ones put a distance between them and God, not having the rationality of the happiness fecundated by the will through working the good, through which uses to show itself the godlike life. So the rationality of the nature it is the indicator of the scales, which shows plainly the movement of everyone's will, if these one leans towards bad or towards good, following that in conformity to this movement to be imparted of the godlike life, or to not be imparted of it. This is because under the report of the existence and of the eternal existence, God will comprise everybody, He being present in everyone; but under the report of the eternal happiness, He will comprise in a special manner only the angels and the holy people, leaving to the ones who aren't like so the eternal unhappiness, as fruit of their will.

## Question no. 62

*What does it mean what Saint Prophet Zachariah says: "And I raised my eyes to heavens and I saw: and behold a sickle flying, the length of twenty cubits, and the width ten cubits. And it said to me: This is the curse which comes out over the face of the whole earth". And after a little: "And I will bring it out, says the Lord All-Keeper, and it will enter in the house of the thief and in the house of the one who perjures into My name and in a liar way, and it will place itself into the middle of his house and it will destroy it, both its wood and its stones"<sup>524</sup>. What the sickle is and the measure of the length and of the width? And why is flying? And what the thief and the one who perjures are; and which is his house? What the wood and the stones are?*

## Answer

God, Who said: "I have multiplied the visions and in the hands of the Prophets I have sown Myself"<sup>525</sup>, he sent from before, imagined into symbols, diverse news about His wonderful coming into body, in order to save us, unveiling to us through each Prophet, other and other news, according to the power of understanding of each of us. So, by giving also to the great Prophet Zachariah also the understanding of His future mysteries into body, he showed to the Prophet in a wise manner towards contemplation, a sickle. Through this He showed that, after he will embody Himself, in mysterious and diverse ways into the images comprised into the visions of the Prophets, he will receive Himself, truly and willingly, our creature by nature, to show that the truth foretold through images has really come to us. Therefore the sickle is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only

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<sup>524</sup> Zachariah: 5: 1-4: Septuagint.

<sup>525</sup> Hosea: 12: 10: KJB: "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets."; 12: 11: ROB: "I have spoken to the prophets and multiplied their visions and also through the prophets I have spoken into parables."

One Begotten Son and the Word of the Father, the One Who to Himself He remains always simple according to the nature, and to me He makes Himself composed according to the hypostasis, as only Himself knows, by receiving the mentally animated soul, without that through the full union, with the body according to the hypostasis, to receive the union into a sole nature and without that through the full difference from the body to be cut into two Sons (1). And full union according to hypostasis I call the consummated not-division, as full difference according to the nature, the consummated not-merging and not-changing. This is because the mystery of the godlike embodiment doesn't introduce the difference according to the nature of the ones of which it consists also a difference according to the hypostasis, neither the union according to the hypostasis into a sole nature. The first thing doesn't happen to receive the mystery of the Trinity in addition; and the second ones, to not be according to the nature nothing of the same kind and of the same being with the godhead (2). This is because the two natures have united themselves into a hypostasis, but not into a sole nature. And this is for being shown through union both the unity of the hypostasis, resulted from the gathering together of the natures, but also the difference of the natures which have met into an undivided unity, each of them remaining, in what concerns the natural feature, outside any changing and merging.

This is because if the union of the natures would have been done to give birth to a sole nature, the mystery of our salvation would have remained totally unknown to us, not having from where or how to find out about the descent of God to us. This is because in such a case, either the body would have been changed into the godlike nature due to the godlike union, or the godlike being would have been changed into the nature of the body, or both of them would have been merged through who know what admixture, producing another one different from them, not preserving either of them the natures which they consists of, its undiminished rationality (3). But

either the body would have been changed into the godlike nature, or the godlike nature would have been changed into body, or whether the union in a sole nature would have pushed the natures towards producing a nature different from them, I wouldn't know the mystery of the godlike embodiment, not being able to ascertain after the union a difference of nature between body and godhead. And if there exists into Christ after union any difference according to the nature between body and godhead (because they aren't according to the being one and the same thing the godhead and the body), this means that the union of the two natures united in Him wasn't done to give birth to a sole nature, but for making to result a sole hypostasis regarding which we don't find any difference at all. This is because according to hypostasis the Word is One and the Same with His body. This is because Christ receives referring to something a certain difference, than He cannot be according to that something One in every way. But if referring to something else He doesn't receive any difference, according to that something He is, and it is piously said to be, One in every way and always.

Therefore being given that any difference, because it is difference, it has at its basis the iota of difference of the ones which differ (because without this iota there wouldn't be difference), and the iota cannot be indicated without a number, it is good to use the number only for showing the difference of the natures of which Christ consists after the union, indicating according to this that the natures are preserved unchanged after the union, but not dividing though number the union of the ones who collaborate in a sole hypostasis. And this thought we show it to us without adding any number to the word hypostasis. This is because in what it is there is not cogitated any difference, there is not introduced any iota. And where the iota cannot be introduced, there also the number – which indicates the difference - has no reason to be. So according to hypostasis is composed. This is because according to hypostasis is one and the same and sole. Thus, on one hand we

guard the unity and the identity of the hypostasis, and on the other hand we confess the difference of the natures which converge into a sole hypostasis. This is the One saw by the wonderful Zachariah flying in an image of a sickle. This is because the Word of God is the reaper of all evilness and nescience.

"Its length, he says, was of twenty cubits, and its width of ten cubits". This is because Christ, as God and Word, he widens progressively in the way of the Providence until to ten cubits, namely in the ten godlike commandments of the active life (4). This is because in Ten Commandments it is widened the Word of God, through Whom legislating the fulfillment of the ones which must be done and the restraint from the ones which mustn't be done, he embraced the whole movement of the will of the ones who are taken care of by Providence. And te One Who made Himself body and embodied Himself in a consummated way, also He elongates Himself to twenty cubits because the body is composed by multiplying the elements with the senses (5). This is because five are the senses and four the elements, of which union is composed the nature of humans. But five times four give the number twenty. And through length the Scripture indicated the mode of the oikonomia, for its height and for the fact that the mystery of the godlike embodiment it is above all nature.

The sickle was seen "flying", due to the fact that it has nothing earthly, as also due to the speed, nimbleness and, in a word, for the shortness of the word (6). This is because it circumscribes the whole salvation of the human only in the heart of the ones who are saved, being given the fact that the salvation consists only of faith and good knowledge (7). And in fact there's nothing that you can do quickly than to believe and easier than to confess with your mouth the grace of the One in Whom you believe. The first thing shows the animated love of the one who believes to his Maker, and the second one the faithful disposition towards the neighbor. And the love and the sincere mood, or the faith and the good conscience, are unseen

movements of the heart, which don't need to happen of any matter from outside: "For short word will God make on earth"<sup>526</sup>.

This is the "curse", which God has sent over the face of the earth (8). It is the true curse over the true curse. This is because the disobedience of Adam has become curse through his mistake, because he didn't allow the commandment to grow up for bringing the fruits of the righteousness, for the creation to take blessing; over the Adam's curse it comes the natural blessing of God and the Father, which so it becomes curse of that curse coming out of the sin, towards abolishing the disobedience which has grown up bringing forth the fruits of the injustice, to be the creation stopped from growing into sin anymore<sup>527</sup>. This is because has made Himself curse and sin, the One Who untied my curse and ha removed the world's sin.

This is because I had two curses: one of them was the fruit of my will, namely the sin, through which the fruitful seed of the soul, namely the power of the virtue, fell in the ground; and the other one it was the death of the nature, brought rightly upon the nature, due to my will. This death pushed the nature forcedly and without its will where was sown the seed of my willing will (9). So, God Who created the nature, He took willingly upon Himself the curse with which the nature was condemned, namely death, and thus He killed through His own death on the cross the curse of the sin which lived within me through my will. And so the curse of my God has become curse and death of the my sin, not allowing to the disobedience to reach at the fruits of the injustice; but in the same time it has become blessing of the godlike righteousness through the fulfilling of the commandments, and endless life<sup>528</sup>.

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<sup>526</sup> Isaiah: 10: 22; Romans: 9: 28.

<sup>527</sup> Joel: 1: 26; II Corinthians: 5: 21; Galileans: 3: 13.

<sup>528</sup> The embodiment of the Son of God it is both blessing and curse; blessing to the man and curse to the sin. This is because what is curse to the sin it is blessing to the man.

But the names of blessing and curse refers here to the embodiment of the Lord, for it refer firstly to the pain and death brought over the nature by the Adam's sin with the will. These pain and death were a curse to the sin, and in a certain sense, even to the human nature. But their purpose was especially to be a blessing to the nature, because they urged the man to stop

This sickle, namely our Lord and God Jesus Christ, he destroys the thief and the one who perjures and he demolishes the house of that one. But the thief and the one who perjures are the cunning devil (10). It is thief because it has brought out, with the trick of the deceitfulness, the man from Paradise, namely kidnapped a thing and a creature and a precious wealth of God, pulling the man in this place of troubles, and it made dirty the icon of the godlike glory with the many stains of the sins. Through this the devil sought to gain to itself wealth from a stranger wealth, lusting with evilness the stranger goods, and not for keeping them, but to steal them, to tear them apart, and to destroy them (11)<sup>529</sup>. And the devil is perjure because it is liar and deceptive. This is because by promising to give to Adam the glory of the godhead, it lured Adam towards the dishonor and the mockery of the speechless beasts, and to rightly say, it made Adam even more reproachable than any beast<sup>530</sup>, making him to be the more reproachable than the beasts through his lack of rationality, the more he is more gruesome what is against nature than what is according to the nature. And it even estranged Adam from immortality, by dressing him up into the defiled coat of the corruption.

And house to this thief and perjure has become the present world of corruption and of ceaseless confusion, which the devil achieved it by robbing the man (12) and into which the devil was allowed to steal furthermore, for the reasons known by God (13), Who allowed it to steal until lasts the cyclical course of the time.

But the Word of God, placing Himself into this world as in a house, through His unspoken embodiment, and tying up

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committing the sin willingly. This second curse the Son of God took it upon Himself through embodiment, setting us free from its burden. He made Himself curse in our place, but making Himself blessing just through this.

<sup>529</sup> Joel: 10: 10: KJB (unconfirmed quotation).

<sup>530</sup> Psalms: 47: 12: KJB: "Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."; 48: 12: ROB: "And the man, being in honor, he didn't understand; he joined himself to the mindless beats and resembled himself to them".

the devil<sup>531</sup>, He crumbled it down, and its wood and its stones, namely the statues and the altars and the pedestals of the statues, he crumbled them down and destroyed them (14). This is because through them the devil and the father of the lie, imagined itself to be honored by the gone astray ones, as some disfigured and multiform god, due to the fact that is did of his insanity a means for own glorifying, as one which is much more insane than the ones fooled in this way. So, the Savior of our souls and of our bodies, Who has made Himself man for His love for people, by placing Himself through body in this house of the thief and of the perjure, which is the devil, namely in this world, he crumbled the world down wholly, namely he destroyed the strayed mode of the world from before (15) and he straightened the world again according to the rationality of the true knowledge. And shortly speaking, by banishing the thief from the foreign wealth, he has made Himself again Master over His owns through virtue, building over all earth under the sky, in a glorious way, His Saint Church.

Or maybe the devil is a thief (16), because it plots until these days how to attract towards itself, through the trick of the deceitfulness, the desire of every man. And perjure and liar, because it is deceptive and deludes the feather-minded ones to renounce at the goods from their hands, hoping other good, even better ones, and because it causes in an unnoticed manner, through the things reckoned as being sweet, all kind of troubles, to the ones who listen to it. And the house of this thief and liar it is the loving of sin mood of everyone's heart. This house has as "stones" the callousness and the insensibility of the heart towards the good ones, and as "wood" the memories which easily ignite the unclean fire of the passions.

Or maybe the Scripture calls "wood", figuratively, the lust (18). This is because it has been written that the wood

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<sup>531</sup> Matthew: 12: 29: KJB: „Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.”; ROB: “How can somebody to enter in the house of the strong one and to plunder his goods, if he won't tie firstly the strong one and them to loot his house?”

corrupted first the movement of the lust<sup>532</sup>, directing it against the nature; then because it is the power of the soul which is ignited by any passion, as the wooden matter is ignited by fire. And through “stones” the Scripture maybe indicates the toughness and the insensibility of the wrath`s movements, wrath which doesn`t listen to the virtue`s rationality. All of these, together with the “house” in which they are, namely with the internal mood, the Word of God crumbles them down and destroys them, through His dwelling getting out of it, firstly through faith, the devil, which once built his accommodation through deceitfulness in this house and reckoned itself to the strong. The Word of God chains the devil with unbreakable chains and loots the house, taking out from the heart the easy to ignite habit of the passion together with the callousness towards the good ones<sup>533</sup>.

Or maybe “stones” the Scripture calls the carelessness of the soul towards the good ones, namely the insensibility towards virtues. And through “wood” it calls the zeal towards the evil ones (18). All these being banishes away from the heart of the believers by the Word, the Word doesn`t cease to reconcile and to unite in a sole body of the virtues the ones who are far away and the ones who are close, crumbling down the wall from the middle of the separation, namely the sin, and tearing apart the charter which forced our will towards evil, and submitting the bodily thought to the law of the ghost<sup>534</sup>. Through the ones from far away it understood, I think, the movements of the feeling, which are totally stranger to the law of God. And through the close ones it understands the thinking (mental) works of the soul, which according to the kinship aren`t far from the Word. These ones are gathered together by the Word after tearing down the bodily law, uniting them

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<sup>532</sup> Genesis: 3: the whole chapter.

<sup>533</sup> Luke: 11: 22: KJB: “But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”; ROB: “But when a stronger one comes upon him and defeats him, that one takes all the weapons on which he trusted, and takes the spoils from him and shares them.”

<sup>534</sup> Ephesians: 2: 14-17; Colossians: 2: 14.

together into ghost through virtue<sup>535</sup>. This is because I think that through the “wall from the middle” it meant that law of the body according to the nature, the affection for the passion, or the sin. This is because only the reproachable affection towards passions it becomes wall of the law of the nature, namely of the suffering part of the nature, separating the body form the soul and form the rationality of the virtues, and not allowing to be done with the help of the doing the passing to the body through the mediation of the soul (19). But by coming the Word and overcoming the law of the nature, namely the suffering feature of the nature, he has abolished the affection towards the contrary to the nature passions.

This is my Lord and my God Jesus Christ, Whom the Prophet saw like a sickle, having twenty cubits in length, like One Who embraces the whole work of the senses directed towards the sensitive one, and ten cubits in width, because my God and Savior comprises the whole rational movement. This is because some people say that counting it is not a deed which belongs through nature only to the rationality. And the decade is the embracing and the end of each number. Consequently the Word of God embraces not only the powers of the senses, but also of the mental works, as One Who is the Maker not only of the bodies, but also of the incorporeal ones.

And “sickle” He was called into vision, not only because He reaps the evil out from the rational nature, that evil which was not Him Who sowed it, and He gathers the nature which He hasn’t scattered it; but also because He reaps and places into the godlike barns the saved ones (20). At last also because, being handled by the works of the virtues, He unites Himself with the powers of the soul (21).

But to the one who wants to see, the word of the Scripture indicates here two persons and two houses, which are abolished by the sickle. For it is said: “And he will enter in the thief’s house and in the house of the one who perjures in My name”. Through the two persons the Scripture has indicated

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<sup>535</sup> Through the mode of the virtue.

the two general works of the devilish deceitfulness which comprise all the others, or the two modes of the works. And through the two houses it has indicated the two general moods of the man, favorable to going astray, which contain all the others. For instance when the evil one kidnaps through the trick of the deceitfulness the innate knowledge of the nature about God, attracting this one towards itself, it is “thief” because it tries to make itself master over the worshipping owed to God, or in other words, it deviates the mental sight of the soul from the spiritual rationalities from creatures and circumscribes the power of the cogitation only to looking at the outside countenance of the sensitive things. And when abuses of the natural movements, by attracting sophistically the power of soul’s activity towards the ones contrary to the nature and through the ones which seem to be good tempts through pleasure the soul’s desire towards the evil ones, it “perjures” n the name of God, carrying the deluded soul towards other things than the promised ones. So it is “thief” because it kidnaps to itself the conscience of the nature, having like house the loving of nescience mood of the deceived ones. And “perjures” because it convinces the soul’s power of activity to vainly toil with the contrary to the nature ones, having like house the loving of sin mood of the ones who listen to it (22).

Therefore the devil is a “thief”, because it crooks the knowledge of the nature<sup>536</sup> and “perjures”, because it deviates the power of activity of the nature from committing the virtue. The house of the “thief” it is the disposition of the soul which stays at the basis of a liar knowledge, and the house of the “perjurer” it is the disposition penetrated by the uncleanness of the reproachable passions. Into these ones, by penetrating with love of people the savior Word of God, He makes them dwelling place of God through the Ghost, bringing the knowledge of the truth instead of the straying and of the nescience and the virtue and the righteousness instead of evilness and of cunningness.

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<sup>536</sup> It changes the direction of the natural knowledge.

In this way He shows Himself through them into the righteous ones.

So through persons, the Scripture indicated the modes of the diverse cunningness of one and the same evil devil, and through “houses” the corresponding dispositions to these modes of the ones who are mastered by the devil.

But “thief” is also the one who uses the godlike words towards alluring the ones who listen to him, without having known their power through deeds. He is the one who occupies himself with the empty uttering of those words for buying glory and he hunts through the word of the tongue the praise from the listeners, namely the reputation of being righteous. Simply speaking, “thief” is the one of whose life doesn’t correspond to the word and of whose disposition of the soul it is in contradiction with the tongue, namely the one who hides himself under the stranger goods (23). The Scripture rightly says about this one: “And God said to the sinner: what are you telling my righteousness and are you taking upon you My covenant through your mouth for?”<sup>537</sup>

And again “thief” is that one who covers with the modes and with the seen morals the unseen cunningness of the soul and with decent showings the inward disposition (243). This is because the one from before steals by claiming the words of the knowledge the mind of the listeners, likewise this one steals through the hypocrisy of the morals the feeling of the watchers (25). Towards these ones also it will be said: “Shame on you, you who have put on stranger vestments”, or: “The Lord will uncover their face in that day”<sup>538</sup>. But it seen to me that I hear everyday God saying these in the hidden of my heart, as one who feels myself guilty of both of these things.

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<sup>537</sup> Psalms: 49: 17: KJB: “But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?”; 48: 17: ROB: “And to the sinner God said: “What are you telling My righteousness and take My covenant into your mouth for?”

<sup>538</sup> Isaiah: 3: 17: KJB: “Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts.”; ROB: “The Lord will make bald the pate of the daughters of the Zion, the Lord will uncover their nakedness.”

And “the one who perjures or lies in the name of the Lord”, he is the one who promises to God a virtuous life and he does things which are stranger to the promise, and through not fulfilling the commandments he transgresses, as I also do, the covenant that he assumed to live a pious life. Shortly speaking, the one who perjures and lies it the one who decided himself to live according to the will of God, but he hasn't fully mortifies himself towards the present life. This one has sworn to God, namely he has promised to keep the flowing of his life without any reproach in the godlike toils, but he hasn't fulfilled the promise and that's why he is not at all worthy of praise (26). “For it will be praised, he says, each one who swears on Him”, namely all the ones who promises his life to God and who truly fulfills the oath of the good promise through the deeds of the righteousness. But if the one who fulfills his promises will be praised, for he has sworn to God and has kept his oath, it is obvious that the one who has transgressed his promises will take rebuke and reproach, as one who has lied.

By entering, the sickle, namely the knowledge of God and the Father, Who is knowledge and virtue by nature, into the hearts of these ones as in some houses, in other words into the everyone's disposition, he totally destroys them, and abolishes them through the changing into good the state from before of everybody's heart, and bringing them both towards the impartation of the good that lacks to them. Thus he transforms the thief of the knowledge into fearless worker of the truth, and the thief of the apparent gentleness of the cultivated morals in competent cultivator of the hidden disposition of the soul; also, He makes the ones who perjures to be true guardian of his promises, a man who strengthens his promises through fulfilling the commandments.

## Scholia

1. Look at the mystery; look how he brings to silence the ones who reckon that the natures stay by themselves; look at death of the Italian and of Nilus<sup>539</sup>.

2. We don't admit, he says, into Christ any difference of the hypostases, because the Trinity has remained Trinity also after God and the Word has embodied Himself, not being added to the Holy Trinity some person due to the embodiment. But we admit a difference of the natures, for not showing the body of the same being with the Word according to the nature.

3. The one who doesn't admit the difference of the nature, he hasn't anything to demonstrate the confession that the Word has become body without any change, not recognizing that what has received and what has been received in the unique hypostasis of Christ and God the One, have been preserved according to the nature what they were before.

4. What the Lord is sickle for, and what does it mean the ten cubits width.

5. Why also Him, as sickle, has the length of twenty cubits.

6. Why the Prophet saw the sickle flying.

7. The faith gives birth through hope the perfect love for God; and the good conscience gives birth through keeping the commandments the love for the neighbor. This is because the good conscience doesn't have as accuser the transgressed commandment. And these ones can be believed by the heart of the ones who want themselves after the true salvation.

8. To whom the Lord is curse and whose curse He is.

9. Because the man had his desire directed towards the earth, in that direction was him being pushed unwillingly, by death.

10. What the "thief" and the "perjure" are.

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<sup>539</sup> It is unknown who was that Nilus of Latin faith, or a Greek from Calabria. It is rejected here the Nestorian or adoption-ist thesis.

11. Cunning robbery is the enslavement of the nature through deceit. The tearing apart with which the devil tears apart the ones kidnapped by it, it is the stabbing of the will directed towards life in God and the total killing of the memory of this life. And the perdition is the nescience which is born into the torn apart ones, due to the lack of knowledge about God. That's why the devil steals their thought by kidnapping to itself, to lack them of the life into virtue and knowledge.

12. What the house of the "thief" and of the "perjurer" is.

13. Somebody could say that the reason for which it has been allowed to the devil to plunder it is that of knowing also the men through experience its evilness and so appearing it to them to become even more hated; also this is for all the people to unveil one to another, by trying, the disposition of their soul and through this each of them to have the conscience inner defender to himself. This is because God doesn't need such an experience, to find out how we are, He having the everybody's conscience in a existential way and before their birth.

14. What the wood and what the stones are.

15. The crumbling down of the house, namely of the strayed world has been made through embodiment.

16. The showing of those ones according to another meaning.

17. Another meaning of those ones.

18. This meaning is appropriate to the passionate ones. This is because the one who suffers of the total stillness towards good, he moves himself as quickly as possible towards evil. This is because the stillness towards both of them is impossible.

19. The movement of the senses together with the work of the mind gives birth to the virtue accompanied by knowledge.

20. What he called Him "sickle" for.

21. The word is united with the powers of activity of the soul, the sickle with the hand of the reaper, for cutting off the passions and for gathering the virtues.

22. The devil is a “thief” because it produces the nescience; and it “perjures” because it produces evilness. The devil has as “houses” the deceived mind of the ignorant ones and the tendency towards sin of the will of the sinner one.

23. A beautiful and very appropriate meaning to us who falsify, for the sake of the vain glory, the adornment of the virtue and of the knowledge.

24. But “thief” is, he says, also the one who shows feignedly a deceiving countenance of virtuous man and covers with the appearance from outside the hidden cunningness of the will.

25. The one who simulates the knowledge only by uttering words, he steals the mind of the listeners towards his own glory; and the ones who pretends himself to be virtuous only through his behavior, he steals the sight of the watchers towards his own glory. Both of them by stealing through deceiving, they lead to straying: one of them on the soul’s understanding of the listeners, and the other one the bodily feeling of the watchers.

26. What the one who “perjures” is.

### **Question no. 63**

*At the same Prophet has been written also: “And it said towards me: What do you see? And I said: I saw, and behold a chandelier (candlestick) totally made of gold and a lamp (torch) above it; and seven candles on it and seven funnels at the candles from on it. And two olive trees above it, one on the right hand of the lamp and another one on the left hand”<sup>540</sup>. What the*

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<sup>540</sup> Zachariah: 4: 2-3: KJB: “And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: // And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.”; ROB: “And He said me: “What do you see?” and I said: “Behold I see a chandelier totally made of gold, with seven candles, and above the chandelier there is a vessel with oil out of which start seven pipes towards the seven candles; // And next to it, two olive trees, one of

*chandelier is and why it is made out of gold; what the lamp from above the chandelier is, and what the seven candles are; what the seven funnels at the seven candles are; what the two olive trees are and why are they on the right hand and on the left hand of the lamp?*

### **Answer**

The prophecy word, describing further, in a symbolic manner, the all-lightened and supra-bright greatness of the Holy Church, has described this vision thus, wanting to show, I think, the meaning of its new mystery. So the chandelier totally made of gold it is the all-praised Church of God, clean and undefiled, righteous and unaltered, undiminished and receiver of the true light (1). This is because one says that the gold being unalterable, if deepened into earth doesn't blacken and isn't chewed by rust and if is burnt it doesn't diminish itself. Besides this, it strengthens and it renews through its natural force the power of the sight of the ones who stares at it. So is also the all-glorifies Church of God, which really exceeds the cleanest nature of the gold. The Church is unaltered as one which hasn't any stranger mix in its secret teaching about God, confessed through faith (2); it is clean because it shines of the light and of the glory of the virtues (3); it is undefiled not being stained by any dirt of the passions (4); it is righteous as one which has not touch with any of the evil spirits (5). Living into the earthly circumstances it is not darkened by the rust of the sin; at last, it remains undiminished and not-decreased because, though it is burnt from time to time in the oven of the persecutions and tried by the relentless rebellions of the heresies, it doesn't suffer under the burden of the trials any weakening in its teaching or in its life, in its faith or in its discipline (6). That's why the Church straightens through grace the understanding of the ones who look at it with awe. This is

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them on the right hand of the vessel with oil and another one on the left hand.”

because the Church on one hand calls the faithless ones, giving them the light of the true knowledge, and on the other hand, the Church keeps the one who contemplate with love its mysteries, guarding unharmed and without illness the pupil of their understanding. And on the ones who suffered some shake the Church calls them again and restores to them through work of advice their ill understanding. So it is understood the chandelier seen by the Prophet, according to one of the meanings of the words from above.

And the lamp from above it, it is the parental and true light, which lightens every man who comes into the world<sup>541</sup> (8): namely our Lord Jesus Christ. This One, by receiving our body taken from us, He has made Himself and He was called lamp, as the One Who is the wisdom and the Word according to the nature of God and the Father, Who is preached in the Church of God through the right faith and Who is extolled and unveiled among nations by the virtuous living and by the keeping the commandments. He lightens like a lamp (torch) to everybody in that home, namely in this world, as Himself says: "Nobody lightens a torch and places it under bushel, but into candlestick that lightens to all the ones form the house"<sup>542</sup>. So He called Himself "torch" for the fact that being God according to the nature and making Himself body according to oikonomia, as light according to the being he is kept into the shell of the body in an uncircumscribed way through the mediation of the soul as torch, like the fire is kept through the wick. This was understood also by the great David, when he called the lord "wick", by saying: "Your law is torch to my feet and light to my

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<sup>541</sup> John: 1: 9: KJB: "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."; ROB: "The Word was the true light which enlightens every man, who comes into the world."

<sup>542</sup> Matthew: 5: 15: KJB: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."; ROB: "Neither they lighten a torch an place it under bushel, but into the candlestick, and it lighten to everybody from the house."

paths”<sup>543</sup>. This is because the Savior and my God delivers me from the darkness of the nescience and of the evilness. That’s why He was also called by the Scripture “torch”. This is because the word (in Greek language) λύκνος (torch), it comes from untying the darkness = λύειν τό νύκος (for νύκος it means darkness, as the ones who search the meaning of the words they say). This is because by scattering, like a torch, the mist of the nescience and the darkness of the evilness, He made Himself way of salvation to everybody, guiding through virtue and through knowledge towards the Father all the ones who want to step, through fulfilling the godlike commandments, on His footprint, as on a way of righteousness. And the candlestick (the chandelier) it is the Holy Church, for in it lightens, through preaching, the Word of God, by sending its rays of the truth upon everybody who are in this world as in some house, fulfilling the everybody’s understanding with the godlike knowledge (9).

On the other hand the “bushel” symbolizes the Jews` synagogue, namely the bodily serving of the law, which covers through the thickness of the letter`s symbols the light of the true knowledge of se meanings (10). The Word<sup>544</sup> (the Rationality) doesn`t want at all to be under this bushel, but He wants to be placed on the top and on the height of the Church. This is because if the Word is kept under the letter of the law, as under a bushel, this will deprive all of the eternal light by not giving the spiritual sight to the ones who strive themselves to reject the deceiving feeling (the perception), which is not capable but of error and doesn`t notice but the corruptible aspect of the bodies related to itself. The Word wants therefore to be placed onto the candlestick, namely into the church, or in rational serving into ghost, to lighten everybody, from all over

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<sup>543</sup> Psalms: 119: 105: KJB: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”; 118: 105: ROB: “Torch to my feet is Your law and light to my paths.”

<sup>544</sup> As in many places also here λόγος it means Christ Himself, but also the word of the preaching, or the rationality (the meaning) hidden into the words and into the ceremonies of the law. Better said, the rationalities of the meanings of the Scripture are the rays of the godlike Logos.

the world, teaching them to live and to behave themselves in accordance to the rationality, and to take only that much care of their corporeal ones as it is necessary to cut off any affection of the soul towards them; also to be their whole striving for not giving to the soul any material imagination, after the feeling (the perception of the senses) has been quenched through rationality, which at the beginning was rejecting the rationality (the word) and it has accepted the irrationality of the pleasure as a slippery snake (11). This is because rightly has been ordered the death against the feeling to not be able anymore to offer to the devil entrance towards the soul. And this feeling, being one according to the genre, it is divided in five species, convincing through the perception of each sense the deceived soul to love the one related to that sense, instead of loving God (12). That's why the one who wisely listens to the rationality<sup>545</sup>, he willingly chooses the body's death before the forced and unwillingly death, totally separating his will from the feeling<sup>546</sup>.

But the one who remains only at the letter of the Scripture, he has as sole master over the nature the feeling (the perception), through which is manifested the soul's affection for the body. This is because the letter, if it is not understood spiritually, it is limited in its content by feeling, which doesn't allow the meaning of the written ones to penetrate to the mind. And if the letter addresses itself only to the feeling, everyone who receives the letter in a Judaic way only as a history, he lives according to the body, enduring each day through the leaning of the will the death from the sin, due to the alive feeling, not being able to kill the body with the deeds of the ghost, to live the happy life into the ghost. "For if you live according to the body, you will die", said the godlike Apostle,

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<sup>545</sup> In this fragment the rationality, to which opposes the feeling, could be also the divine Logos, or better said the rationality from within us it is in the same report with the Logos as the meanings of the things with Him.

<sup>546</sup> The death of the feeling it is meant to save the man from the death of the nature. Death as condemnation it has been caused by the increasing of the senses' work, which tied the man to the seen world, separating him from God. The death of the feeling is the death of the bodily man, of the man leaned towards the ones from outside, of the spiritually "dead" man, for resurrecting the inner man, the true man, the rational man, the self of the man.

“and if you kill with the ghost the deeds of the body, you will live”<sup>547</sup>. Therefore, by kindling the torch, namely the rationality which brings the light of the knowledge through contemplation and through deeds, as ones who limit to the letter the not-comprised by the mind power of the wisdom, but on the candlestick, namely into the Holy Church, on the peak of the true contemplation, to spread over everybody the light of the godlike dogmas.

About this Holy Church the law foretold figuratively that it will be a cast chandelier and totally made of gold. This is because on one hand it hasn’t within it any empty part, which to be lacked of the power of the Word, and on the other hand it is stranger of any material redundancy and it hasn’t anything earthly.

But the great Zachariah, describing this chandelier in every detail, he adds that beside the lamp there were also seven candles (torches). We must here understand these seven candles also in another way that we have presented the candle (the torch) form the Gospel. This is because not all the persons and all the things which are expressed through the same word must be understood in one and the same way, but each of the said ones must be understood according to the place from the Holy Scripture, it we want to take in consideration the purpose of the written ones<sup>548</sup>.

Through candles I reckon that the Holy Scripture understands here the works of the Holy Ghost, which the Word gives them to the Church, the Word being the head of the whole body (13). This is because it was said: “And the Ghost of God will rest over Him, the ghost of the wisdom and of the understanding, the ghost of the advice and of the strength, the

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<sup>547</sup> Romans: 8: 13: KJB: “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”; ROB: “For if you live according to the body, you will die, and if you kill, with the deeds of the ghost, the body, you will be alive.”

<sup>548</sup> This fragment has a full meaning only in Greek language, because the “candle” from here (Zachariah) is expressed in Greek through the same word: λύχνος, also the “torch” from Matthew: 5: 15. In the Romanian translation has been avoided the confusion, because λύχνος from Zachariah was translated through candle, and λύχνος from Matthew: 5: 5, through torch.

ghost of the knowledge and of the awe: and the ghost of the fear of God it will fill Him up”<sup>549</sup>. But the head of the Church, according to a human image, is Christ. Therefore the One Who has the Ghost according to the nature, he gives, as God, the works of the Ghost to the Church. This is because the Word making Himself man to me, he works to me the whole salvation, by giving to me through the mines the ones that are proper to Him according to the nature, to me for whom He has made Himself man. And by placing Himself in the situation of the One Who receives for me, He shows His own ones. This is because by asking, as a lover of the men, for Himself the grace which I need it, he attributes to me the merit (the power) of His feats according to the nature. Therefore it is said that for me He receives even now what He has through nature without beginning and above rationality. This is because the Holy Ghost, like he is God and the Father through nature, likewise is also the Son according to the being, as the One Who existentially and unspoken proceeds from the Father through the born from the Father Son; and he gives to the chandelier, namely to the Church, as some candles, His won works. And like the candle dispels the darkness, likewise the works of the Ghost bring out and banish from the Church the sin of many sorts. Thus the wisdom abolishes the recklessness, the understanding removes the lack of understanding, the advice banishes the lack of discernment, the knowledge erases the nescience, the awe banished the faithlessness and the wickedness of its deeds, and at last, the fear removes the

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<sup>549</sup> Isaiah: 11: 2-3: KJB: “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; // And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.”; ROB: “And the Ghost of God will rest over Him, the ghost of the wisdom and of the understanding, the ghost of the advice and of the strength, the ghost of the knowledge and of the good faith. // And the ghost of the fear of God will fill Him up. And He will judge not after the countenance from outside, and neither will Him give his decision according to those that are rumored,”

callousness of the carelessness. This is because not only the commandments are light, but also the works of the Ghost (15).

But the candles which burn their whole life into Church, spreading the light of the salvation, they are also the stairs which sustain its good order. For instance the wise teacher of the godlike and high dogmas and mysteries, he is a candle which unveils teachings unknown to the multitude. And the one who listens with understanding the wisdom spoken by the consummated ones, he is also a candle, because as wise listener he guards into himself the light of the spoken ones<sup>550</sup>. The one who discerns with good advice the times from the things, and accommodates the modes of activity to the rationalities of the things, by not allowing them to mix together in an inappropriate manner, being a wonderful advisor, he is proven to be also him another candle. And the one who endures with unshaken thought the attacks of the unwilling trials, as the blessed Job and as the valiant martyrs he is a strong candle, by keeping also with manly patience, unquenched, the light of the salvation, as one who has God as strength and praise<sup>551</sup>. The one who knows the craftsmanship of the cunning one and doesn't ignore the rushing in of the unseen wars, he is also another candle unveiled by the light of the knowledge, being able to say rightly together with the godlike Apostle: "For its thoughts aren't unknown to us"<sup>552</sup>. And the one who live a

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<sup>550</sup> Not only the one who teaches is a honored level into the Church, but also te one who listens attentively. And he even follows immediately after the first level of the wise ones, being on the level of the understanding. Besides, often the one who teaches he feels how his word's power increases and how he is enlightened due to the understanding listening of the one whom he teaches. The listening with understanding it is also a grace, and the graces compose together a whole as also the ones in whom these graces dwell. The unveiling of the truths is in certain measure the fruit of the communion between the preacher and the listener. These levels are others than the levels of the ordination entrusted with administrating the Mysteries. The two systems presuppose each other.

<sup>551</sup> Psalms: 43: 2; KJB: "For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"; 42: 2; ROB: "For You are, God, my strengthening; why have You rejected me? Why am I walking saddened when my enemy troubles me?"

<sup>552</sup> II Corinthians: 2: 11: KJB: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."; ROB: "To not let ourselves to be overwhelmed by satan, because his toughts aren't know to us".

pious (rightly-faithful) life according to the commandment of the Lord, straightening it through virtues, he is another candle, as one who proves his awe (faith) through the modes of his behaviors. At last, the one who waiting for the judgment makes out of the restraint a wall which stops the entering of the passion to the soul, he has made himself another candle, by zealously cleaning, through the fear of God, the stains of the passions imprinted into him and making his life transparent and luminous by erasing the against nature defilements (16).

Therefore the cleanliness of the worthy ones brought by virtues is done by the Holy Ghost through fear, awe and knowledge; and the illumination which renders the knowledge of the things according to the rationalities on the ground of which it exists, He gives it to the ones worthy of light, through strength, advice and understanding; at last, He renders the consummation to the ones worthy of deification through the all-luminous wisdom, simple and entire, unmediated elevating them and in every aspect towards the cause of the things, as much as it is possible top the people, insomuch then shine within them only the godlike characteristics of the kindness of God. Through this, they knowing on themselves out of God, and knowing God out of themselves (17), because between them and God there is not a wall anymore to separated them, being given the fact that between wisdom and world there is not a name, they will enjoy the unshaken not-changeability, as ones who have exceeded everything from amidst (18), in which was hiding yore the danger of mistaking in what regards the knowledge<sup>553</sup>.

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<sup>553</sup> After the danger of mistaking has been overcome in what regards the knowledge, it has been achieved the moral not-changeability. Therefore the moral fickleness it is due to the knowledge mistakes, in the danger of this sort of mistakes is the man until he is amongst the created things. But once reached at the unmediated connection with God, he cannot mistake anymore. The mistakes come out of the possibility of wrong deductions from the things created by God (from Truth). When the Truth is directly lived, the mind cannot mistake anymore, because the Truth overwhelms its works, through which it would be wrong. This Truth is God, being contemplated by the created mind. He is directly contemplated, but still by the created mind. As such, this Truth is one with God, between this Truth and God there isn't anything amidst, but still is not God as God knows on Himself. This is the Wisdom. It is the supreme form in which God can communicate on Himself to the creature; in the frame of the wisdom the created mind can advance infinitely. But it never can pass beyond it.

Because they were elevated in an unspoken and not-understood way, according to the grace, on the highest peak, infinite and by infinite times infinite, beyond anything according to the nature, through a unspoken nescience and silence.

“And the seven funnels from the seven candles from on the candlestick”. Our word about candles indicated two meanings of theirs. The one about funnels it will start here. Some people say that the funnel is vessel in a cup form, in which people use to put the oil which must be pour in the candle for nourishing and sustaining the light. Therefore, according to the higher meaning, the funnels of the seven candles of the seen candlestick are the habits (aptitudes) and the dispositions capable of receiving the diverse rationalities and modes of moral activity, namely the works of the Ghost; in other words the habits and the dispositions of the ones who have received within Church the sharing of the gifts (19). This is because as without oil there is impossible to maintain the candle unquenched, in the same way without a habit which to nourish the good ones through rationalities, moral activity modes, ideas and appropriate and due thoughts, it is impossible to keep the light of the gifts unquenched. This is because any spiritual gift it needs a habit (aptitude) corresponding to it, which to ceaselessly pour, as oil, the matter of the cogitation, being preserved through the habit of the one who has received that gift.

The funnels of the seven candles of the chandelier are therefore the senses (the aptitudes) corresponding to the godlike gifts of the Holy Church. Out of them the wise and the not-sleeping guardians of the given goods, as out of some vessels, like the wise virgins from the Gospel, the oil of the joy in the candles of the gifts (of the charismas).

“And two olive trees above it: one on the right of the lamp and other on the left side”. The words has described very beautiful and appropriate the whole vision which refers to Himself. Because by showing the chandelier, the lamp, the

candles, the funnels, it has brought also two olive trees. This is because it was due that in the same time with the light to the naturally cogitated also the cause which gives birth to the power and maintains the light, lets the light of the chandelier to be quenched, by not being fuelled. The two olive tress of the golden chandelier, namely of the Holy Universal Church, are the two Testaments, out of which, as out of some olive trees, it is squeezed out, through pious seeking and research, as in olive oil, the substance of the meanings, which fuels the light of the godlike gifts. Through this substance the habit of everyone guards unquenched the light of the gift which has been given in accordance with his measure, the light which is maintained, as through oil, through the meanings of the Scriptures (20). This is because without olive tree one cannot find true and natural oil and like without vessel one cannot hold the received oil, and by not being fueled by oil the light of the candle quenches, in the same manner without the Holy Scriptures one cannot truly achieve the godlike substance of the meanings and without the habit capable of receiving as a vessel, these meanings, there cannot emerge a worthy of God cogitation, and the light of the knowledge out of gifts, not fueled by the godlike meanings, cannot maintained unquenched by the ones who have it.

Therefore, by raising us our sight to the spiritual meaning, our word resembles the chandelier to the Church; the lamp is the embodied God, Who dressed Himself in our nature in an unchanged way, according to the hypostasis; the seven candles with the gifts, the works of the Ghost, as limpidly showed the great Isaiah; the funnels of the candles with the skills capable of the godlike meanings; at last, the two olive trees, with the two Testaments, out of which is received through wise striving the substance of the godlike meanings through which is kept unquenched the light of the godlike mysteries (21). “One on the right side, and other on the left side”: through the right side I reckon that the Prophet understands the more spiritual part of the Scripture, and through the left side he understands the more bodily ones (22). And if the left side

indicates the more bodily side of the Scripture, and the right side the more spiritual one, I reckon that the olive tree from the left side it means the Old Testament, which occupies itself more with the active philosophy, and the olive tree from the right side, the New Testament, which teaches us the new mystery and gives birth within each believer the contemplative skill. This is because the first one offers to the ones who occupy themselves with the godlike philosophy the modes of the virtues, and the second one the rationalities of the knowledge. The last one, by kidnapping the mind out of the mist of the seen ones, it elevates it towards what it kindred to it, cleaned of the whole material hallucination, and the first one cleans it of the whole addiction after the material ones, getting out through the force of the manhood, as with a hummer, the nails which nail down the affection of the will to the body. The Old One elevates the body crossed through by rationality (rationalized) towards soul, through the mediation of the virtues, impeding the mind to descend to the body; and the New One elevates the mind, lit by the fire of the love, towards God. The fist one makes the body one with the mind, through the willing movement, and the second one makes the mind one with God through the habituation (with the work) of the grace. Through this the mind achieves so much likeness to God, than, the One Who is impossible to be known by somebody according to His nature, God, He can be known out of this mind as of an icon (23).

In this way we understand these things. And if somebody would want to refer the meaning of the said ones also to each human being, he will also find out beautiful and pious meanings. For instance he will be able to understand through chandelier the each man's soul (24). This in entirely made of gold, as one that according to its mental and rational nature, it is incorruptible and immortal and is honored with the most imperial power of the free will. Above the soul there is the lamp of the faith, namely the Word Who made Himself body and to Whom the soul strongly believes and truly serves. And within the soul there is placed the lit torch (candle) of the word of the

knowledge, according to the teaching of the same Word of God, Who says: "Nobody lights the torch and places it under bushel, but in the candlestick to lighten to everybody from the house." This is because the Lord maybe He calls "torch" the word of the knowledge into ghost, shown through deeds, namely the law of the ghost (26). And "bushel", the bodily though of the flesh, namely the passionate law of the body. The law of the grace mustn't be placed under these ones, but within soul, which truly is a golden candlestick to lighten through the lightnings of the deeds of the righteousness and of the wise thoughts, to everybody from within that house, namely from within Church, of from within this world; in this way the ones who bears this light determines the watchers to imitate and to glorify also themselves through the deeds of the virtue and not only through the simple uttering of words, the heavenly Father, namely God (27), Who produces within saints, on the peaks of the mysterious contemplations of the knowledge, the adornment of the virtuous deeds of the righteousness. This is because it was written: "For they see your good deeds and to glorify your Father from heavens"<sup>554</sup>.

Be you understanding like this the chandelier and the lamp from the Prophet's vision. And through the seven candles one will understand, according to the previous explanation, the diverse gifts of the Ghost, which descend their light and rest themselves over the one who consummated himself into Christ through virtue and knowledge (27). This is because the Scriptures understands here through Christ, the one who live according to Christ and he is full of the light of the same rationalities and modes of activity, as much as it is possible to the man, having also himself wisdom and understanding, advice and strength, knowledge, awe and fear, through which it is said that God looks, as through some spiritual eyes, over the

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<sup>554</sup> Matthew: 5: 15: KJB: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."; ROB: "Neither they light torch and place it under bushel, but in the candlestick, and lightens to everybody from within that house".

entire earth of each heart. “Because these seven candles are the eyes of the Lord, which look over the whole earth”<sup>555</sup>.

“And seven funnels at the ends of it”. The funnels are the skills of doing and of contemplation of the ones worthy to be imparted with the godlike gifts. Out of these ones they pour the substance of the mysterious thoughts, as they would pour some olive oil out of some vessels, preserving unquenched the light of the gifts of the Ghost (28).

And you will understand through the two olive trees, as I said, the two Testaments (29). The one from the left side of the lamp is the Old Testament, which ceaselessly provides to the knowing or contemplative power of the soul, as olive oil, the spiritual rationalities of the knowledge through activity (30). And the one from the right side is the New Testament that ceaselessly provides to the passive side, or to the active side of the souls (31), as olive oil, the spiritual rationalities of the knowledge through contemplation<sup>556</sup>. So through each one the mystery of our salvation is beautifully consummated, being shown the teaching through the life and the glory of the life through the teaching. In this way the activity appears as a working contemplation, and the contemplation as a cognizant activity. Shortly speaking, the virtue appears as a manifestation of the knowledge, and the knowledge as a power sustaining the virtue (32). And through both of them, namely through virtue and through knowledge, it is manifested a sole wisdom. Through this we know that the two Testaments sum together in

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<sup>555</sup> Zechariah: 4: 10: “For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”; ROB: “For who despised the time of these small beginnings? They will rejoice seeing the scales of the builder in the hand of Zerubbabel. And these seven (candles) are the eyes of the Lord which range the whole earth.”

<sup>556</sup> The two Testaments complete to each other, as the activity and the contemplation complete each other in the man’s spiritual life. The contemplation is fueled by the olive oil of the virtues, symbolized through the Old Testament, and the virtues are fueled with the olive oil of the contemplation, symbolized by the New Testament. Or the olive oil of the two olive trees, the virtuous activity and the contemplation, the Old Testament and the New Testament, they fuel one and the same light, of the unitary spiritual life. The two Testaments ceaselessly complete each other. A new proof that the contemplative one doesn’t reckon himself as untied from the virtuous activity.

every aspect and they are unite together in committing that unique mystery through grace, more than are unites the body and the soul in composing a sole man, through their synthesis (33).

And if somebody who is strong in the spiritual meanings, says that the two olive trees are the two laws, the natural law and the spiritual law, he wouldn't deviate from the truth. In this interpretation the natural law, as the one from the left side of the lamp, namely of the God – the embodied Word, it would offer to the rationality, through the feeling (the senses' perceiving) related to it, the modes of activity regarding the virtue, understanding them out of the sensitive things. And the spiritual one, from the right side, it would pick up, through the cogitation related to itself, the rationalities out of the things, regarding the spiritual knowledge (34). And thus through both of them we fill up the diverse habits and skills corresponding to the spiritual gifts, with active and contemplative seeing, just like some funnels of the candles, guarding unquenched the light of the truth.

Or, by understanding this place of the Scripture in a wider and higher sense, we can consider the two olive trees from the right side and from the left side of the lamp as symbolizing the Providence and the Judgment. And in the middle, between Them, there stays as in a golden chandelier in the Holy Universal Church, or in the soul of each saint, the light of the truth that lights to everybody. And this light is the Word, as God Who comprises everything and unveils the true and the all-general rationalities of the Providence and of the Judgment, through Whom the things are preserved and in Whom it consists the mystery of our salvation, decided before all ages and done in the last of times. Among these ones, the Providence, which stays as an olive tree at the right side of the lamp, we perceive it only through faith in an unspoken mode of the hypostatical union of the Word with the body animates in a rational way; and the Judgment, which stays to the left side, we understand it in an unspoken way out of the life-maker

sufferings endured by the embodied for us God (35)<sup>557</sup>. This is because He firstly accepted the willing embodiment due to His kindness, as the One Who is by nature the Savior of everybody; and them He sundered the willing sufferings like Redeemer (36). For God didn't make Himself man from before, to suffer, but to save the man through sufferings, because the man became the slave of the passions by transgressing the godlike commandment, after being without passions at the beginning.

Therefore at the right side there is the mystery of the embodiment of the Word, the one according to the Providence. This mystery works through grace the deification from above nature of the ones who are saved, deification decided from before ages, at which no creature will be able to raise itself according to its nature. And at the left side of the life-maker mystery of God, Who wanted to suffer according to the body. This mystery is conform with the Judgment and it causes on one hand the consummated abolishment of all the characteristics and movements, which penetrated into nature through disobedience, and on the other hand it does the full restoration of all the characteristics and of all the movements which are conform to the nature from the beginning (37). Consequently to this restoration there won't be within creatures any diminishes or falsified rationality. These ones, namely the Providence and the Judgment, or the embodiment and the passion, on one hand for the steadfastness and the incorruptibility of the virtue and of the manly steadfastness with the deed, and on the other hand for the brightness and for the transparency of the contemplation and of the mysterious knowledge, they were likened by the Prophet to two brass mountains, out of which they came out, like some chariots with

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<sup>557</sup> The Providence in general it is shown in all the positive gifts which God gives to us on natural and on supra-natural way, and the Judgment it is shown in all the trials and the punishments which God sends to us for correcting us and for consummating us. But both the Providence and the Judgment they culminated in the embodiment and in the sufferings of the Lord. That's why His embodiment is a special manifestation of the Providence, and the sufferings a special manifestation of the Judgment. Or through the embodiment of the Lord have been poured out all the godlike gifts for the whole world, and in His sufferings was poured out the whole pedagogical harshness for all the mistakes.

horses<sup>558</sup>, the four Gospels (38), which crosses and went around the earth and they healed the Adam's wound, making through faith and good-living the Ghost of God to rest Himself upon the country from north, namely over the nations mastered upon by the mist of the nescience and upon the nature of which the darkness of the sin forcedly ruled daily (39).

Or maybe the four ones they represent the force of the four general virtues, equal in number to the Gospels (40). For also this force crossed, as through an earth, the whole heart of the believers and healed the reproachable wound, caused to the heart by passions, making to rest, by fulfilling the commandments, the Ghost of God in the Northern land, namely into the body, because it has brought out, to be shown, through the deeds of the righteousness, the law of the Ghost.

Or maybe the two olive trees can be also understood as being the contemplation and the activity (41). Amongst these ones the contemplation it is highlighted by the Providence manifested through embodiment, and the activity is put in work by the Judgment manifested through passion<sup>559</sup>. The first one, concerning the soul, it is on the right side of the Word; the second one, concerning the body, it is at the left<sup>560</sup>. The first one calls the mind towards the kindred with God, the second one sanctifies the feeling (the work of the senses) with the ghost and erases from within it the seals of the passions (42).

Or again, through the two olive trees we must understand the faith and the good knowledge (43). In the middle of these ones there stays the Word, to Who through faith the believers bring righteous worshipping, and through the

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<sup>558</sup> Zechariah: 6: 1 and the followings.

<sup>559</sup> A more literary translation would be: Out of these ones the Providence manifested in embodiment determines to be shown the rationality of the contemplation; and the Judgment manifested in passion determines to be worked the activity's mode. The meaning of the sentence is: the embodiment facilitated the contemplation of God, by bringing Him in direct connection with the human nature. And the passions activate in all the believers the striving of cleaning themselves through the deeds of the mortifying ascesis.

<sup>560</sup> Through contemplation we enrich the soul; through the deeds of the ascesis we clean the body.

good conscience they serve Him with awe, striving to do good things to each other.

Or through the two olive trees the Scripture symbolized the two peoples: the one of pagans and the one of Jews (44). These peoples are also called the “sons of the anointment”<sup>561</sup> (so the Scripture interprets the olive trees), for their birth in ghost and for the gift of the adoption given to them towards deification. In their middle there is the embodied God, staying as a chandelier in the Universal Church, the one and the only, and through this reconciling them with Himself and to each other and by making them birth givers of light through virtue and knowledge.

Or maybe through the two olive trees the Scripture mysteriously also indicated the soul and the body (45), because the first one is adorned as an olive tree with the rationalities of the true knowledge, and the body is covered by the deeds of the virtues.

And if somebody would say that the Scripture’s word indicates through the two olive trees also the two world (46), good it would be also this meaning. Because the Word of God actually stays in the middle of these world, making the intelligible one to mysteriously flicker in the sensitive one through images, and teaching us to understand the sensitive one as being in the intelligible one through rationalities (47).

And again if somebody would say that the vision of the two olive trees it would symbolize the life from here and the future life (48), good it would be also this explanation. This is because also between these ones there stays the Word, pulling us out from the life from here through virtue and taking us to the future one through knowledge. This was understood by the wonderful Habakkuk when he said: “In the middle of two lives

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<sup>561</sup> Zechariah: 4: 14: KJB: “Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”; ROB: “And he made me understand: “These ones are the two anointed sons: which stay before the Lord of the whole earth””.

you will be known”<sup>562</sup>. He understood through “lives” what the great Zachariah understood through “brass mountains” or through olive trees, namely the two worlds, or eons, of the corresponding to them lives, or the soul and the body, or the activity and the contemplation, or the habit of the good and its working, of the law and the Prophets, or the entire whole Testament and the New Testament, of the two peoples, the one amongst pagans and the one amongst Jews, or the two laws, the natural one and the spiritual one, of the faith and the good conscience. In the middle of all of these ones, there stays the Word, praised and extolled by all the ones, and guiding all the ones towards a sole harmony into good, as everybody’s God. This is because He created all the things for becoming the not undone connection of everybody, by uniting all things to the good and amongst them.

And through the chandelier from the vision the Scripture indicated maybe the Church and the soul, as the ones which through their nature have the light of the grace as an achieved good. This is because only God has the good by nature. That’s why all the ones which are by nature capable of light and kindness, they receive the light and the kindness from Him through participation.

These things said our word about the written ones taking care of the due measure. But you, Pious Father, who has seen by himself, with the help of God, even higher things than these ones, lighten with the always shining rays of your understanding my soul worn off of seeing.

## Scholia

### 1. What the chandelier is?

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<sup>562</sup> Habakkuk: 3: 2: KJB: “O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”; ROB: “Lord, I have heard about Your fame and I have feared Your plans, O God! Make Your work live during the years and, in the passing of the time make it known! But, into Your anger, remember that you are also merciful!”

2. How can be the Church inalterable Gold?
3. How it is clean?
4. How it is defiled?
5. How it is without blemish?
6. How it is diminished?
7. What does it mean the lamp of the chandelier?
8. Not every man who comes in this world is necessarily enlightened by the Word, because many remain not-enlightened and not-partakers to the light of the knowledge. But it is obvious that only the man who comes by his own will in the true world, namely into the one of the virtues. Therefore every man who really comes, through the willing birth, in this world of the virtues, he is surely enlightened by the Word, achieving a steadfast habit in virtue and a true and without mistake knowledge.
9. How God, the embodied Word, is also a torch?
10. What the bushel is, under which is not appropriate to be put the torch, to be covered?
11. Through woman he understood the feeling, through the snake the pleasure. This is because both of them are diametrically opposed to the rationality.
12. The feeling (the sensation) taking over the mind, it teaches the mind to worship many gods. This is because the feeling being enslaved through every sense of the passions, it serves to the corresponding sensitive thing, as to God.
13. What the Scripture does it mean through candles?
14. Look at the greatness of the grace. Look at the borderless ocean of the teaching about God (the theology).
15. Which the fruits of the gifts are?
16. What the candles are according to other meaning?
17. The fear, the awe and the knowledge give birth to the active philosophy, while the strength, the advice and the understanding give birth to the natural contemplation into ghost. But the mysterious teaching about God (the theology) it is given only by the godlike wisdom.

18. Through the ones from the middle it is understood the nature of the sensitive ones and of the intelligible ones, through which the human mind is elevated towards God, as towards the cause of the things.

19. What, in a higher meaning, the candles` funnels are?

20. What the two olive trees are?

21. Recapitulation and short definition of the explanations from before.

22. What the "right" and what the "left" are?

23. The Old Testament, he says, being the symbol of the doing and of the virtue, it makes the body to consent to the mind in each movement. And the New Testament, by giving the contemplation and the knowledge, it lightens the mind which occupies itself with them in a secret way, with the godlike gifts.

24. A particular meaning of the chandelier which refers to the soul of everyone.

25. What the torch is?

26. God makes Himself and is called Father to and by the ones who have willingly received the clean birth into Ghost. These ones, bearing upon themselves the seal of God, Who gave them birth, which they show through virtues, like a face of the soul, determine the ones who look at them, to glorify God through the changing of their behaviors, because they offer to those ones their own life as an exquisite example of virtue. This is because God mustn't be glorified only with the empty word but through the deeds of the righteousness, which heralds more than the word does, the godlike majesty.

27. What must we understood that the seven candles are?

28. What the funnels are?

29. What the two olive trees are?

30. The Old Testament provides to the one who occupies himself with the knowledge (to the gnostic), the modes of the virtues, and the New Testament renders to the one who occupies himself with the activity, the rationalities of the true knowledge.

31. He calls the passive part of the soul as active part.

32. The one who shows the knowledge embodied in activity and the activity animated by knowledge, he has discovered the exact mode of the deifying work. And the one who has only one of these, separate from another, or he made out of knowledge an inconsistent (without support) hallucination (fantasy), or out of activity an idol (a form) without soul. This is because the knowledge without deed it is not different at all from hallucination, not having the deed as basis; and the irrational activity it is the same thing with an idol (with a form) without soul, not having the knowledge which to animate it.

33. Like the soul and the body constitute the man by their union, likewise the activity and the contemplation give through union, a sole cognizant wisdom<sup>563</sup>, and the Old and the New Testament constitute a sole mystery.

34. The natural law is on the left hand, because it uses the feeling (the perception of the senses). It offers to the Word (to the rationality) the modes of the virtues and makes the knowledge to be working. And the spiritual law is on the right hand, because it works through the mind. It mixes into feeling (in perception) the spiritual rationalities from things and it makes the activity to be rational.

35. The Providence was shown in the hypostatical union of the Word with the body, and the Judgment in the fact that Jesus Christ accepted to suffer for us with the body. Through them, namely through union and passion, it was done the salvation of everybody<sup>564</sup>.

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<sup>563</sup> The scholia 32-33 are the most assertive denial of the opinion that in East the contemplative is disinterested of activity. The most beautiful definition it is the ones in the Scholium 33: the union of the activity and of the contemplation.

<sup>564</sup> The Westerners accuse the Easterners that they reckon the salvation done through the descent of the divine substance in creation through embodiment. Actually, while they reckon the salvation as an exclusive fruit of the cross – the theory of the satisfaction, of the substitutive expiation – the Easterners recognize the role of both of them in the realization of the salvation, both of the embodiment and of the suffering, as one can see out of this scholium. Namely, whilst in West the embodiment is only the necessary premise of the crucifixion (the Son of God must make Himself man for the crucifixion being possible), in East even the intimate union of God with the mankind it constitutes a means of salvation and

36. The embodiment was done towards the salvation of the created nature, and the sufferings towards the redemption of the ones held by death, due to the sin.

37. The mystery of the embodiment, he says, removes the characteristics opposite to the nature from the human nature, and it restores the ones which are according to the nature.

38. The Providence and the Judgment, the embodiment and the passion, he imagined them as two brass mountains, out of which gush the four Gospels.

39. Through the country form North he understood the gentiles which were yore in the error of the nescience as in a country of the darkness, and now they have reached in the country of the light, at the knowledge of the truth, through the grace of the four Gospels, as incorruptible elements, being reborn according to the inner and mental man towards the eternal life, through faith.

40. Another meaning of the four chariots.

41. Another meaning of the olive trees.

42. To the contemplative it is unveiled the rationality of the embodiment, done on the ground of the Providence, and the active shows in the work the image of the Word's sufferings, borne on the ground of the Judgment.

43. Another explanation of the olive trees.

44. Another explanation of the same things.

45. Another explanation of the same things.

46. Another explanation of the two olive trees.

47. The one who understands the seen world, he contemplates the intelligible world. This is because by imagining the intelligible ones he shapes them through the feeling (he dresses the up in forms through senses) and he schematizes in mind the seen rationalities. He understands the sensitive world through the intelligible one, transferring through rationalities the feeling (the content of the feeling) into

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of deification of the man, the passion remaining though necessary in the process of realizing these ones.

mind, and the intelligible one through the sensitive one, twining the mind with the feeling whilst he contemplates the forms.

48. Another explanation of the same things.

### **Question no. 64**

*What meaning does it have the Word from Jonah the Prophet who said about Nineveh: “In which there dwell more than twelve thousands of men, who haven’t known their right neither their left”<sup>565</sup>? I ask you because I don’t find in the letter a satisfying answer. Because he didn’t say “children”, to make me thinking that he is speaking about little babies, but “men”. And which man, having his mind undamaged, doesn’t he know his right and his left? Therefore tell me what the “men” are and what the “right” and the “left” are, according to the higher meaning?*

### **Answer**

Nothing from what it is written into Scripture about persona, or places, or times, or other animated or unanimated things, sensitive or spiritual ones, we mustn’t understand them always in the same mode, if we want to not produce a disaccord between history and the spiritual meaning of that place from the text. That’s why the one who wants to find out without mistake the godlike meaning of the Scripture, he must take each of the listed things for each time in another meaning, according to the differences of the happened or told events, giving according to the place and to the time the due interpretation. This is because any name recorded in the

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<sup>565</sup> Jonah: 4: 11: KJB: “And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”, ROB: “But how could I not have mercy on the great city of Nineveh with more than one hundred and twenty thousands of people, who don’t know to discern the right from their left, and with a great number of cattle?”

Scripture it has many meanings, according to the diverse possible etymologies of the Hebrew word. This fact we can see it clearly also here.

This is because Johan is interpreted, according to its diverse etymologies, “the resting and the gift of God”, or “the healing from God”, or “the gift of God given to them”, or “the toil from God”, or “corn”, or “the running away from adornment”, or “their sadness” (1). And then he arrives also in Joppa and on the sea and inside the whale and in Nineveh and even under the pumpkin. Amongst these ones, Joppa is interpreted as “the place from where is seen the joy”, or “the wonderful beauty”, or “strong joy” (2). Therefore the Prophet Jonah symbolizes Adam, of the common nature, or Christ, or the gift of the prophecy, or the ungrateful people of the Jews, which is saddened by any good thing and envies all the godlike gifts (3). For instance Jonah symbolizes Adam and the common nature when flees from Joppa on sea, fact for which, according to one of the meanings of his name, it is called “the running away from adornment”. This is because Joppa symbolizes the Paradise (4), which is and rightly called as “the place from where the joy is seen”, or “strong joy”, or “wonderful beauty”, being given the richness of the incorruptibility from within it, like it was the Paradise planted by God. “And he planted, he says, the Lord paradise in Eden and He put there the man He built”<sup>566</sup>. But what the trees out of it are, either would be about seen trees, or about spiritual trees and what the tree of life form the middle of the Paradise is? What are all these trees out of which Adam received commandment to eat, but he maybe didn’t even touch them? Because God says to him: “Out of every tree from paradise you will eat”<sup>567</sup>.

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<sup>566</sup> Genesis: 2: 8: KJB: “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”; ROB: “Then God planted a garden in Eden, towards East, and He put there the man whom He built”.

<sup>567</sup> Genesis: 2: 16: KJB: “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat.”; ROB: “Then the Lord God gave commandment to Adam and said: “You can eat out of all the trees from paradise.”

Joppa it means also the virtue and the knowledge, as also the wisdom consequent to them (5). The virtue, when it is interpreted as “wonderful beauty”; the knowledge when it is understood like “place from where is seen the joy”. And the wisdom, when it is interpreted like “strong joy”; this is because through wisdom the consummated man receives an unspoken joy, namely the powerful joy which truly sustains the life according to God, or the godlike life of the man. This is because “the wisdom it is tree of life to everybody who stick themselves to it and sure foundation to the ones who lean themselves against it, as on the Lord”<sup>568</sup>. So the human’s nature always runs away from Joppa, namely from the habit of the virtue and of the knowledge, as also from the grace of the wisdom which comes consequently to them, as Adam ran away from Paradise by disobedience. It runs away, for its cogitation lays with pleasure in evil deeds. And by running away, it is drown willingly on the sea, namely on the dirty waves of the sins, as Adam rolled himself down in this world after falling off the Paradise, embracing the deceitfulness and the fickle confusion of the material things, caused by waves and causing other waves. And the gain of the ones who embrace this deceitfulness it that they are confounded and they are swallowed by the whale and they are overwhelmed by water to the soul. Than they are surrounded by the biggest deep, and they head deepens in the cracks of the mountains, for finally descending on the bottom of the earth, of which latches are eternal locks<sup>569</sup>. Because that land, being the sole of the lowest deep, it is truly “darkened and gloomy, earth of the eternal dark, where is no glint of light and one cannot there see life of the mortals”, as

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<sup>568</sup> Proverbs: 3: 18: KJB: “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.”; Solomon’s Parables: ROB: “Tree of life it is to the ones who master it, and the ones who lean against it, they are happy.”

<sup>569</sup> Jonah: 2: 6: KJB: “I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.”; 2: 7: ROB: “I descended to the foundations of the mountains, the latches of the earth were closed upon me forever, but You pulled out from corruption my life, Lord my God!”

the great Job says, the one who victoriously waged great wars for truth<sup>570</sup>.

So the Prophet secretly shows Adam, namely the common nature of the people in each of the states which he passed through: how he ran away from the godlike goods, as from Joppa, and it is drown in the dirt of the life from here, as on a sea, by sinking itself in the agitated and restless ocean of the earthly passions (6); how it is then swallowed by the whale, the spiritual an insatiable beast, namely by the devil, and how it is overwhelmed from all quarters by the temptations` water to the soul, namely is overwhelmed by the life`s temptations; and then how it is surrounded by the ultimate deep, in other words how it is wrapped the mind by the total nescience and how it is overwhelmed the judgment by the heavy burden of the sin; and after that how its head is being sunk in the crevasses of the mountains, or how the first teaching about monad is caught, being founded on faith (7), which is the head of the entire body of the virtues, amongst the thoughts of the cunning powers, as in some dark crevasses of the mountains, and it is shattered in many opinions and hallucinations (because through the crevasses of the mountains the Scripture indicated the deceiving ideas of the ghosts of the evilness, which dwell somewhere in the bottom of the last deep of the nescience); finally, how descend down to earth, “of which latches are eternal locks”, or how falls in the habit empty of any godlike feeling and deprived of any movement of life of the virtues, namely into a habit which has no feeling for kindness and no desire which to move itself towards God (8). It is the habit upon which the darkness of the nescience and the terrible torrent of the evilness weights as an abyss (9), and in which have their roots the mountains of the evilness, namely the ghosts of the evilness in which crevasses being deepened the human nature,

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<sup>570</sup> Job: 10: 21: KJB: “Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;”; ROB: “Before I leave for not coming back anymore from the land of the dark and of the shadows of death”.

it became later basis for the most sinful habit, as one which became residence and tool of their error and of their evilness. In this habit are, as some eternal latches, the addictions of the soul to the material things, which don't allow the cogitation to be delivered from the darkness of the nescience, for seeing the light of the true knowledge (10). This habit was maybe indicated, as I told you a little earlier, in a covered manner, the great Job, through the words: "Darkened and gloomy earth, earth of the eternal darkness"<sup>571</sup>. It is darkened earth, because it is barren of any virtue and activity. And he continues: "in it there is no glint of life, it means knowledge and truth, and it cannot be seen life of the mortals", namely a living dignified of the rational beings (11).

The Prophet reaches to be in all these states, maybe for imagining through himself the passions in which the mankind rolled down ruefully, making as itself the characteristics of the common nature of the men. That's why when symbolizes Adam, it is appropriate to him one of the meanings of the mountain, namely "the running away from adornment". When though symbolizes God, Who descended Himself for us in our ones, through a mentally animated body, making Himself like us, except the sin, and anticipatively depicts the mystery of the embodiment and of the passions concerning the salvation, then through his departure from Joppa on the sea he indicates the descent of the Lord from heavens into this world (12), and through his swallowing by a whale and through his throwing out unharmed after three days and nights, he foretells the mystery of the burial and of the resurrection<sup>572</sup>. That's why it is

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<sup>571</sup> Idem.

<sup>572</sup> Jonah swallowed by the whale symbolizes also the Lord's kenosis during history, having to be shown at the end of the history. As the whale isn't tranquil while he bears Johan in its belly, neither the history doesn't remain uninfluenced by the presence of the Lord in its deep. Often the harsh forces of the history bear in their bellies great ideas. Unwillingly they serve Christ, Who once will reveal Himself. Frown currents and forces of the history bear in their belly great ideas, which otherwise couldn't have been imposed to the peoples, like Jonah couldn't have travelled with so great quickness his road, without the whale which doesn't have been realizing that it serves to a higher plan. The kenosis of Jesus in history is though only apparent. It is a kenosis full of force.

as well as possible appropriate to him another meaning of the name, namely: “the resting and the healing from God”, of “the grace of God given to them”, or maybe also “the toil of God” for the willing passion of the Lord. This is because the Prophet prefigured Jesus Christ through his happenings, the true God, the true “resting” of the ones who are tired with pains, the “healing” of the crushed ones and the “grace” of the forgiveness of the mistakes (13). This is because also our Lord and God, making Himself man, he descended in the ocean of our life, as from a Joppa which is interpreted as “the place from where is seen the joy”, on the sea of this world, as it was written: “Who instead of the joy laid before Him, He suffered the cross, not taking into heed the insult”<sup>573</sup>. And by willingly descending in the heart of the earth, where the cunning one was keeping us locked after he swallowed us through death, Christ elevated again the whole enslaved nature to heavens, after He plucked it out from there through resurrection. Through this He truly is “resting”, “healing” and “grace” to us (14). “Resting”, as the One Who unties through His temporary life the law of the forced slavery of the body; “healing”, as the One Who heals through resurrection the natures crushed by death and by corruption; “grace” as the One Who gives through faith the adoption into ghost and the gift of the deification, granted to each one according to his worthiness. This is because it was truly necessary to reach the light and the power of God and the Father in that earth, for the One Who is spiritual light to scatter the darkness of the nescience and the One Who is hypostatical power of God to break the latches of the sin and so to liberate the nature of the awfully shackled ones by the evil one, by giving them the unquenched light of the true knowledge and the impossible to uproot power of the virtues.

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<sup>573</sup> Hebrews: 12: 2: KJB: “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”; ROB: “With the eyes upon Christ, the starter and the fulfiller of the faith, Who, for the joy put before Him, He endured the cross, He didn’t take heed at its insult and He sat on the right hand of the throne of God”.

But the Prophet symbolizes through his person also the grace of prophesying which is moved through the Gospel from the service of the law, reckoned yore so glorious, at the gentiles, leaving the Judaic people, which became faithful, empty of the joy which they had from that service, for through many troubles, dangers, tribulations, toil, persecutions and deaths, to come back in the Church of the gentiles to God, as at a Nineveh. When symbolizes this grace of the prophesying, the Prophets secretly confesses Joppa, which means that the grace departs from the servicing of the law and starts crossing on the sea of the unwilling enmities and of the toils and of the dangers, until he is swallowed by death as by a whale, without being damaged at all (15). This is because nothing in the world could impede the work of the grace preached to the people through the Gospel: "neither trouble, nor tribulation, neither persecution, nor famine, neither danger, nor sword"<sup>574</sup>. A contrary, through these ones, the grace was being fortified even more, overcoming all the ones who stood against. By suffering, it was even more overcoming the ones who resisted against and thus it turned the strayed nature back to the living and true God, like Johan turned the city of Nineveh. And even if the cunning one imagines that he was covering the grace with the multitude of the persecutions, as the whale did to Jonah, he couldn't keep the grace covered to the end, not being able to weaken the strength of the power through which the grace was working. And this power even was making the grace for shine even more brightly in his disciples, after they were crossing through these enmities, so that the cunning one was causing, through his attacks, rather the overthrowing of his power (16). For he was seeing not only that the grace cannot be defeated by him, but also the fact that the natural weakness of the saints, which were heralding the grace to the gentiles, were being transformed in strength which was being overthrowing all his

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<sup>574</sup> Romans: 8: 35: KJB: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"; ROB: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? The trouble, or the tribulation, or the persecution, or the famine, of the lack of clothing, or the danger, or the sword?"

raising against the knowledge of God<sup>575</sup>; and even when it was thought to be bodily defeated through tribulation, it appeared even more spiritually adorned. This thing was known out of experience of his sufferings, by Paul, the great trumpet of the truth, who became servant of the grace of prophesying into Christ amongst gentiles, for the renewal of the ghost and not in the oldness of the letter. That's why he says: "We have this treasure in vessels of clay"<sup>576</sup>. "Treasure" he calls the word of the grace; and "clay vessels", this suffering body, or the apparent simplicity in the uttered word, which has overcome the whole wisdom of the world, or which comprised in itself, as much as it was possible, the wisdom of God, which the world didn't comprise it and which has filled up the whole world with the light of the true knowledge comprised in itself. And he adds: "For the multitude of the power to be of God, and not out of us; in everything suffering trouble, but not being narrowed; being in need, but not despaired; persecuted, but not forsaken; thrown down, but not destroyed; all the time bearing, the killing of Jesus, into our body, as also the life of Jesus to emerge in our body. For we the living ones always we are giving ourselves to death, for Jesus, for the life of Jesus to emerge in out mortal body, so that death is being worked in us, the life in you"<sup>577</sup>. This is because the ones who were preaching the word of the

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<sup>575</sup> II Corinthians: 10: 5: KJB: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"; ROB: "And all the haughtiness which raises itself against the knowledge of God and every thought, we enslave them, towards the obedience to Christ,"

<sup>576</sup> II Corinthians: 4: 17: KJB: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."; ROB: "And we have this treasure in clay vessels, to be made obvious that the overwhelming power is of God and not from us,"

<sup>577</sup> II Corinthians: 4: 8-12: KJB: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; // Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; // Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. // For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. // So then death worketh in us, but life in you". (We do not quote here the verses from ROB because they have been quoted already in the text from above)

grace, without blemish and wholeheartedly bearing the willing death, through their sufferings they were working to the gentiles that life into ghost, into the knowledge of the truth. This thing was suffered also by Jonah, who, mysteriously symbolizing in himself the grace, he endured so many dangers, to turn from straying, the Ninevites to God. That's why, according to another meaning his name is also interpreted as "the gift from God", or the "toil of God". Because truly loving of people "gift from God" and most-praised "godlike toil" is the grace of prophesying sent to the gentiles. It is "gift", because it gives the light of the true knowledge and provides the incorruptibility of the life to the ones who receive this grace; and it is "toil of God", because it convinces its servants to adorn themselves with the tools for truth and teaches the ones who take too much care of the life into body to grow up more through sufferings than to joys, giving to them as proof of the overwhelming power of the Ghost from inside them, the natural incapacity of enduring the sufferings (18).

Therefore the word of the grace crossing through the nature of the human after many trials, or to the gentiles` Church, as Jonah through many troubles to the big city of Nineveh, it persuades the law which reigns over the nature, to rise up from its throne, namely from the previous habituation in evilness, or from the living according to the senses, and to take off its coat, namely to reject the fumes of the worldly glory for its habits, and then to put on the sackcloth, namely the grief and the unpleasant harshness of this bad suffering and a behavior dignified of the that life pleasant to God, and to sit down in ashes, namely in the poverty in the ghost in which is used to sit down everyone who wants to live with awe and who has in himself the lash of the conscience which whips him for his mistakes (19). But not only the emperor is persuaded, by that preached word of the grace, to believe in God, but also other men, namely the whole to the nature men, convincing them to loudly confess that One is God, the Maker and the Judger of everybody, and persuading them to totally reject their

evil occupations from before and to dress themselves up in sackcloth from the smallest one to the biggest one amongst them, namely to start with the whole zeal a harsh life, a killing of passions life.

“And the men of Nineveh believed to God and they decided to fast and they clothed themselves in sackcloth, from the smallest one to the biggest ones from amongst them. And the word went to the emperor of Nineveh and he raised himself up from his throne and he disrobed his vestment and put on sackcloth and he sat down in ashes. And then was announced and was ordered in Nineveh from the emperor and from his magistrates, being said: The people and the beasts, the oxen and the sheep, to not taste anything, nor to graze, and water to not drink”<sup>578</sup>. “Emperor” of the nature is, like I said, the nature’s law. His “magistrates” are the rational power, the irascible power and the lustful power. The “men” of this city, namely of the nature, are, according to one of the meanings, the ones who commit sin through lust and pull at the burden of the pleasure through the bodily passions. The “oxen” are the ones who use the whole movement of the anger for achieving the earthly goods; for some people say that the ox’s blood when it is drunk cause immediate death to the one who drinks it; therefore its blood is obviously the symbol of the anger. The reproachable “sheep” from here are the ones who graze without mind, only through senses, the seen ones, as on a grass, due to the passion that dominates them. All of these we reckon that in

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<sup>578</sup> Jonah: 3: 5-7: KJB: “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. // For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. // And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:”; ROB: “Then the Ninevites believed in God, fasted and dressed themselves in sackcloth, from the biggest ones to the smallest ones. // And the news reached at the king of Nineveh. And this one rose up from his throne, disrobed his expensive vestment, covered himself with sackcloth and laid himself down in ashes. // Then, by the commandment of the king and of his magistrates, were shouted out and said these ones: “The men and the animals, the big and the small cattle to not eat anything, to not graze and neither to not drink water;”

this place of the Scripture they have a reproachable meaning, until the Word by taking them He transforms them in good ones. That's why the Scripture adds about them: "Let them not taste anything, either to graze, or to drink water". In this way the causes from before, which were sustaining the passions in each of the listed ones, they will be removed. And after the removal of these causes, they will change their bad occupations of which they were dominated yore. Showing this thing the Scripture adds: "And the people dressed themselves up in sackcloth and the cattle didn't graze and they cried towards the Lord and God insistently; and each of them turned from his bad way and from the injustice out of his hands"<sup>579</sup>.

The "people" are, as I said, the ones dominates through a wrong judgment of the rationality by the bodily passions, through the ban usage of the anger and of the lust, in order to have pleasure. Therefore all of them put on, as a sackcloth, the killing of the limbs from earth, or of the entire earthly law and cogitation, and they cry insistently, namely with a loud voice, or with daring, asking for the forgiveness of the sins from before and parting themselves from the course of the habit, as from a certain way, and from the injustice worked by their deeds as some hands.

Thus, Nineveh, understood as the common nature of the human beings, or as the Church of the gentiles, it always has Jonah, or the word of the grace of prophesying, prophesying in it and turning the strayed ones in each day to God. And if we refer ourselves to the spiritual meaning of Nineveh to each man individually, then we say that the big city is the soul of each man (21), to which, after has committed sin, it is sent the word of God to preach him repentance towards life. In this case, through the city's emperor we are understanding the mind; the magistrates are the innate powers;

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<sup>579</sup> Jonah: 3: 8: KJB: "But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands."; ROB: "And let the man dress themselves in sackcloth and let them cry towards God with all their power and everyone to turn away from his evil way and from his injustice that his hands are doing it".

the men are the passionate thoughts; the beasts are the lusting parts of the body; the oxen are the greedy movements of the anger towards the material goods; and the sheep are the movements of the senses which perceive the sensitive things without cogitation. Therefore the Word of God convinces the mind, namely the emperor, to rise up, as from a throne, from the occupation with the nescience, from before, and to disrobe as a coat the liar opinion about things, and then to put on as a sackcloth the repentance for the evil thought ones and to itself lay down, as in ashes, in the habituation of the poverty with the ghost; and then to command to the people, to the beasts, to the oxen and to the sheep to fast, restraining themselves from the food of the sin and from the drink of the nescience, namely to refrain themselves from committing sins and from that deceiver through the senses contemplation, and to put on sackcloth, namely in the habit which kills the contrary to the nature passions, but it cultivates the virtues and the knowledge according to the nature; and then to cry towards God insistently, namely to strongly denounce the ones from before and to pray with humbleness, to receive forgiveness from the One Who can give it; also to ask for the steadfast power for fulfilling the commandments and for guarding the decision towards the good ones from tat One Who is ready to give it to the ones who are asking for, for in this way to be they able to deviate their cogitation from the straying from before, as from a bad way, and to reject the habit of contriving the evil out of the doing powers of the soul.

In this great city, namely in the common nature of the people, or in the Church composed by gentiles, or in the each ones` soul, saved through the word of the virtue and of the knowledge, namely of the faith and of the good conscience, “there live more than twelve myriads (more than twelve thousands) people who do not know their right side or their left side”<sup>580</sup>. I think that the Scripture indicated here through the

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<sup>580</sup> Johan: 4: 14: KJB: “And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand;

twelve myriads, according to a higher meaning, the rationalities of the time and of the nature, namely the comprising knowledge of the seen nature with the ones without which this one cannot exist (22). This is because the number twelve is formed by summing five to seven, and the nature is defiled for the sense and the sevenfold time, then the number twelve indicates, of course, the nature and the time. To be notices through that he said "more than" twelve myriads of people, for us to know that this number is circumscribed and exceeded in an undefined manner "by much more", which compose through them a sum superior to the number twelve.

Therefore the most-praised Church of God, having the rationalities of the virtue and of the knowledge, which exceed the rationalities of the time and of the nature and cross towards the greatness of the eternal and intelligible ones, has "more than twelve myriads of men, who do not know their right hand or their left hand". This is because the one who, due to the lawful virtue, he has forgotten about the passions from the body, as some ones which are to the left and, due to the without mistake knowledge of his deeds, he is not dominated by the illness of the self-appreciation, as one which is on the right side, he has become a man who doesn't know his right hand, because he doesn't love the glory which disintegrates itself, neither the left, because he doesn't allow himself to be stirred up by the body's passions (23).

Therefore, through the "right side" the Scripture understands, as one can see, the vain glory consequent to the so-called feats, and through the "left side", the lack of restraint which emerges consequently to the reproachable passions. These men who don't know their right side and their left side are owned by any soul which is lightened by the sights of the spiritual (intelligible) ones. This is because every soul which

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and also much cattle?"; ROB: "But how can I have no mercy of the big city of Nineveh with more than one hundred and twenty thousand people, who don't know how to discern their right hand from their left hand, and with a great number of beasts?"

draws its power of cogitation from the contemplation of the nature and of the time, it has the natural cogitations<sup>581</sup> as some men which passed the number twelve, or as some rationalities which doesn't tire themselves anymore with the ones which are under nature and under time, but they occupy themselves with the understanding and with the knowledge of the godlike mysteries and that's why they don't know their right side or their left side. This is because the knowledge of the virtues according to their rationality, namely the true recognizing by living of the virtues' cause (24), it determines the ones who are partakers to it to not know anymore at all the insufficiency and the excess of virtue, which stay on the two sides of the virtues' middle, as right and left sides.

This is because if within rationality there is nothing contrary to the rationality (25), it is clear that the one who has elevated himself to the rationality of the virtues, he won't know at all the position of the irrational ones. This is because isn't possible to look in the same time at two things which contradict each other and to know one of them being manifested in the same time with the other one.

This is because if in faith there is no rationality of the faithlessness, and if through nature the light cannot be the cause of the darkness and the devil cannot show itself in the same time with Christ, it is obvious that what is contrary to the rationality it cannot exist in the same place with the rationality (26). And if what is contrary to the rationality cannot be in the same place with the rationality, it is obvious that the one who elevates itself to the rationality of the virtues he cannot know the position of the contrary to the rationality ones. He knows the virtue only as it is, but not as it is reckoned (27). That's why he doesn't know either the right side through excess, or the left side by insufficiency, because in both of these ones the irrational can be ascertained. This is because if the rationality if the border and the measure of the things (28), what it is borderless and measureless, or it is over the border and over

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<sup>581</sup> In Greek language the cogitations, λογισμοί are of masculine gender.

the measure, it is irrational and therefore contrary to rationality. This is because both of these ones bring likewise to the ones, who move themselves in this manner, the falling down from what truly exists. One of them through the fact that it determines them to direct their course of life towards something undefined and unclear (29) and to not have God as purpose, because due to the lack of measure of their mind they aim to deviate from the right side even more towards the right side; and the other one, through the fact that it also deviates them from the purpose, guiding their course of life only towards the ones which hold on the senses, because due to the mind's lack of power, it determines them to reckon as target what it is circumscribed through senses. These ones are not known and are not endured (30) by the one who listens only to the movement of the virtue and he borders through it (31) every movement of his mind, than to not be able to cogitate over rationality or without rationality.

And if somebody wants to elevate his mind at a higher meaning, through the "right side" he can understand the rationalities of the bodiless ones and through the "left side" the ones of the bodies. But the mind which elevates itself towards the cause of the things, not being impeded by anything, it doesn't know anymore these rationalities, because it doesn't see any rationality in God, the One Who according to the cause is above any rationality. By gathering himself towards Him out of all the things, he doesn't know anymore any rationality of the ones from which he has separated himself, and he looks in an unspoken way only at the Rationality at which he has been elevated according to the grace (32).

These men and the ones alike them, who truly don't know their right side and their reproachable left side, they are spared by God; and for them the entire world. (I have said "the reproachable one", because almost all the ones from the Scripture have also a commendable meaning and a reproachable meaning). But the Jew people, envious and enemy of any love for people, it complains about the salvation of the

people and that's why dares to rebel even against the godlike kindness. Full of ingratitude, of discontent and of hatred towards people, it gnashes its teeth, and it is disgusted of life and it makes to itself cause of sadness out of the haunting of the gentiles into Christ. By reckoning, out of nescience, more precious a pumpkin than the salvation of the people, it becomes sorrowful when it sees it withered and chewed by the worm. This madness of the Jews was depicted in himself as type by the great Prophet Jonah, without suffering himself – God forbid that – the shortcoming of the Jews, but by condemning in himself with anticipation their faithlessness, due to which they have fallen down from the glory from before, as from a Joppa (33). That's why the Holy Ghost mysteriously gave this name to him, capable of showing through his diverse interpretations the inward state of all the prefigured ones. Therefore when he unveils in himself the madness of the Jews, which are saddened by the salvation of the people and are offended by the people's wonderful calling, but this madness is being disgusted by life and it wants, by blaspheming the will of God, rather the death due to the pumpkin, his name is interpreted as "their saddening". This saddening is condemned by the Scripture when it says: "God saw their deeds, namely of the Ninevites, that they turned from their evil ways and He felt sorry to punish them anymore and He didn't punished them anymore. And Johan became sad and said: Now Master Lord, take my soul from me, because better is to die than to live"<sup>582</sup>. And again: "And the Lord God commanded to a worm the next morning, and it chewed the pumpkin underneath and it withered. And it was after sunrise, the sun beat upon the head

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<sup>582</sup> Jonah: 3: 10; 4: 1: KJB: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not. // BUT it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."; ROB: "God saw they deeds of repentance, that they turned themselves from their evil ways. And the Lord felt sorrow of the bad predictions which He done to them, and He didn't fulfilled them. // And Jonah was comprised by grief and was lit with anger."

of Johan and he became dishearten and disgusted of his life and he said: better is to me to die than to live"<sup>583</sup>.

Therefore Nineveh is the Church of the gentiles, which it has received the word of the grace and it turned from the straying from before of worshipping idols and that's why it has been saved and it has been found worthy of the glory of heavens. And the bower, which Jonah made to himself after he went out the city, it symbolizes the Jerusalem from bellow and the temple of it made by hands<sup>584</sup>. The gourd symbolizes the temporary mood of the bodily serving and only according to the letter of the law, which isn't steadfast and cannot please the mind. And the worm is our Lord Jesus Christ, as He says about Himself at Prophet Davis: "I am worm and not man"<sup>585</sup>. This is because He truly made Himself and He was truly called worm, for the seedless body which He received. This is because the worm doesn't have mating and mixing, as previous cause of its birth, likewise neither to the birth according to the body of the Lord Didn't precede any mixing. But He is also worm due to the fact that He put on the body as bait put in hook of the fishing rod of the godhead towards deluding the devil, because the insatiable spiritual devil, by swallowing the body for its easy to be grabbed nature, to be torn apart by the fishing road of the

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<sup>583</sup> Jonah: 4: 8-9: KJB: "And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. // And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death."; ROB: "And at the sunrise God started a hot wind from East and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, then he was perishing of heat. And he prayed for his death, saying: "Better is to me to die than to live!" // And the Lord spoke to Johan: "Are you right to be angry for the gourd?" and he answered: "Yes, I'm right to be upset to death!".

<sup>584</sup> Johan: 4: 6: KJB: "And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd."; ROB: "And the Lord God made to grow up a gourd which raised above the head of Johan, to shadow him and to appease his anger. And Johan rejoiced with a great joy for the gourd."

<sup>585</sup> Psalm 22: 6: KJB: "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."; 21: 6: ROB: "And I am worm and not man, the reproach of the men and the defamation of the people".

godhead and in the same time with the holy body of the Word, to let go the whole human nature, which he swallowed it up before; In other words for as he swallowed the man before, by tempting him with the hope of the deification, being himself later deluded human nature, to let go the one deceived by with the hope of deification, being himself deluded that he will lay hold on mankind; then for showing the overwhelming richness of the godlike power, which overcomes, through the weakness of the defeated nature, the strength of the one who defeated it before; and also to be shown that rather God defeats the devil, using the bait of the body, that the devil defeats the man with the promise of the godlike nature (35). This worm chewed the gourd and withered it, namely it put an end to serving the law, as to a shadow, and it withered the self-appreciation of the Jews, founded on it.

“And it was the next day after sunrise”. The next day, namely after the passing of the riddles form the types of the law and of the time decided for its bodily serving, it rose the grace of the new mystery, bringing another day of the higher knowledge and of a godlike virtue, a day which deifies the ones who embrace it. Therefore after the worm chewed the gourd and this sun (because one and the same is both worm and the sun of the righteousness: it is worm, because He was born without seed and His conceiving is above any understanding; and sun, because He descended for me underground, through the mystery of the death and of the tomb and because He is by nature and in Himself the eternal light) (36) He rose from dead through resurrection, “God commanded to a hot wind and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah”. In other words after the sunrise or the sun of the righteousness, namely after the resurrection and the ascent of the Lord, it came the hot wind of the trials over the Jews remained unrepentant and beat upon their head, according to a just judgment, turning as it was written the pain over their heads<sup>586</sup>, as themselves asked for it

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<sup>586</sup> Psalms: 7: 16: KJB: “His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.”; ROB: “Let his injustice return on his head and on his

before by saying: "His blood upon us and upon our children"<sup>587</sup>. This is because, actually, after the resurrection and the ascent of the Savior, came over them as a very hot wind the revenge through gentiles and my Sun cast down to earth the glory and the power of the entire nation, by beating on it as on a pate. This is because they, by closing their eyes of understanding before Him, they knew not the light of the truth, which was shining to them.

Or the hot wind raised against the Jews, who didn't listen to the word of the grace, it is also the forsaking, which stops the rain of the knowledge and the dew of the prophecy and it dries the natural spring of the pious thought from the heart (37). It is the forsaking justly brought upon them, because they defiled their hands with innocent blood and they gave the truth in the hands of the lie and they denied God the Word, the One Who for the salvation of the mankind came to us in our image, without change. That's why they have been left in their own straying, in which there cannot be any disposition close to the faith and to the fear of God, but only a withered, droughty and crossed by every evil passion ambition. It is the ambition that can be characterized through conceit (haughtiness), which it is a cursed passion which consists of combining two evils: the pride and the vain glory. From amongst these ones, the pride denies the One Who is the cause of the virtues and of the nature, and the vain glory falsifies the nature and even the virtue itself (38). This is because the proud one doesn't do anything according to God, and the one enslaved by the vain glory doesn't undertake anything according to the nature. And out of their mixing it is born the haughtiness, which despises God, gossiping about and blaspheming the Providence, and it estranges itself from nature, by using all the ones of the nature against the nature and by breaking the beauty and the good composition of the nature

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pate the violence to descend."

<sup>587</sup> Matthew: 27: 25: KJB: "Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."; ROB: "And the whole people answered and said: His blood upon us and upon our children!"

through the faithlessness in Christ. Shortly speaking, the Jew people, allowing through the faithlessness in Christ, to be its mind tied by the haughty devil, he hated both God and men: God because they considers Him bellow the body's pleasure and that's why they reject to serve Him into Ghost; and the people because they consider the ones who do not descend their nation according to the body out of Jacob as totally strangers to the Maker and that's why they imagine that the killings which they plan against us are well pleasant to God. They don't know, as it seems, in their madness, that the body and the kinship by nation they cannot bring someone so close to God as the soul can, which bears the same seal of the faith as the other souls and the same inwardly inclination of the will towards good. And this totally quenches the law of the body, because there cannot be seen but the rationality of God emerging through Ghost and making everybody one according to the mind, to know the One God and to be amongst them all a sole love and harmony (39), due to which no one is anymore spiritually separated from anyone, even if bodily, according to the places which they are occupying, they are far one to another.

Therefore the hot wind it is the haughtiness, which is the passion of the hatred on God and on people. This is because it withers the heart of the faithless ones, by withering the right rationalities about nature, as a hot wind. For some people say that this wind is produce by the mixing of a wind from East and of one from South and that's why it withers the moisture scattered on the ground. This wind is also called the Evroklidon (the Large Vortex) or Giffon (the Smoky). It bears the first name because is arises from all quarters storm on earth and on sea, and it bears the second name because it brings a dry gloom. But both these ones are also caused by haughtiness.

This is because, in fact, haughtiness stirs up great unrest within soul and it fills up the mind with the darkness of the nescience. This hot wind was stirred up by God, better said He let it come, after the mocking of Christ, upon the Jews, who

achieved a disposition corresponding to it, to be made obvious their will towards God and towards people. That's why, being pricked by the mist of the nescience, they willingly threw themselves on the side opposite to God, not having anything to do, but to complain and to vex themselves of the salvation through faith and of the glory of which the gentiles were imparted and of the rights which they had according to the body and they lost them. That's why they say: "Now Lord take our souls from us, because it is better to us to die than to live". They say this because the gourd was born, namely the serving in the shadows of the law it ceased – which grew during the night and perish also during the night – as one which had no spiritual light for being able to lighten the soul's understanding, being circumscribed only to the images and to the riddles of the symbols (40).

But let's spiritually embrace, through faith and through the righteousness which accompany it, the spiritual Nineveh, namely the Church composed amongst gentiles, which is, as it was written, a great city of God, saved after the three days ordered to it for repentance. And let's hurry up to make ourselves citizens of this great city of God through repentance and through our changing in good. This is because the Scripture clearly says that it is a great city of God: "And Nineveh was a great city of God". Where can, the Jew who respects the truth, find out being said within the Scripture a word like this about the Jerusalem from bellow? Although I have for many times read the Scripture, I haven't found yet anywhere being said: "And Jerusalem was a great city of God". But who could, by relying himself on the power of the word and on the richness of the ideas, to measure and to circumscribe the greatness of this city, which is and which is called of God? To me this thing is impossible, as I reckon that it is impossible to any man with a wise mind, who realizes, even for a little bit, the godlike majesty and doesn't ignore that all the godlike sentences must have something of the greatness of God. But how comes that the first city of Assyrians was "great city of

God", whilst within it kingly reigned the madness of serving the idols, which was so far away from the country called holy, promised to the bodily Israel? Of course that this city couldn't have been called like that, if God wouldn't have seen the greatness of the faith, not-comprised by any word, of the Church from amongst gentiles. Through this He showed the future as present and what was stranger before He impropriated it as something owned and what was worthy of reproach due to the faithlessness He made through His Word to be crossed through by godhead, full of honor and with a future which exceeds any word (41). That's why the Prophet could say: "And Nineveh was great city of God". To this city was sent the word of the grace of prophesying, which heralded to it the blessed destruction, by saying: "three more days and Nineveh will be destroyed"<sup>588</sup>. Reaching at this place of the stated time, I reckon to renounce at the other things, which can be told to the ones who are searching for the higher meaning of the Scripture. This is because I am aiming to write down and to say only what it is sure of not being beside the truth. So, by hearing that the Prophet announces in a determined manner: "Three more days and Nineveh will be destroyed", I reckon that this decision against Nineveh it will remain unchanged, better said I am sure that Nineveh will be tried. This thing must be understood like this: that after the three days, which the Prophet spent in the belly of the whale, symbolizing from before the burial and the resurrection of the Lord, the Scripture waits to come other three days (42), during which will be shown the light of the truth and the true fulfillment of the foretold mysteries, and then to be produced the destruction of the city, being given the fact that these latter days won't symbolize anymore only the truth of the burial and of the resurrection of the Savior, but it will show Him limpidly, being accomplished in reality, whilst

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<sup>588</sup> Jonah: 3: 5: KJB: "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."; ROB: "And then the Ninevites believed in God, they fasted and they dressed themselves up in sackcloth, from the greatest ones to the smallest ones."

the three days from before, spent by Jonah within the whale, only symbolized Him. This is because if any image it refers itself to a truth waited in the future, and the image in this case consisted in the three days spent by Jonah in the belly of the whale, it is obvious that the image will be shown as following after him, in a real manner, the mystery of a new truth. And in fact three days and three nights the Lord spent in the heart of the earth, as the Lord Himself says: "As Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so will be the Son of the man in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights"<sup>589</sup>. Therefore the Scripture by saying: "Three more days", it shows in a hidden manner that other three days passed, because otherwise it wouldn't have said "more", namely "there will be other three days, and Nineveh will be destroyed". Therefore not the image will have destroyed Nineveh according to the godlike decision, but the truth about which it said: "three more days". It is like Jonah would have said: "There will be three more days, after the image shown through me, time during which there will take place a more mysterious burial and resurrection, after which Nineveh will be destroyed".

But somebody bewildered could ask: How God keeps His word, once He decides the destruction but does not execute it? We answer to this one that God keeps His word, by actually destroying and saving the city. The first thing He does it through the fact that those ones reject the straying, and the second one through the fact that they receive the true knowledge. Better said, He kills the straying from within them through the faith invigorated again and He does their salvation through the death of the straying. This is because Nineveh is interpreted as "tightened blackening" and "all-smooth beauty". Therefore according to the meanings of the word, the Lord, after the three days burial and after His resurrection, He destroyed

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<sup>589</sup> Matthew: 12: 40; KJB: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."; ROB: "For as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so will be also the Son of the man in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights".

the “tightened blackening” brought within nature by disobedience and He renewed the “all-smooth beauty” of the nature through the obedience of the faith, by showing again within nature through resurrection the “all-smooth beauty” of the incorruptibility, not-tightened by anything earthly. But one can say this also about the common nature and about the Holy Church and about the everyone’s soul, who has rejected through faith and good conscience the image of the old and earthly Adam and has put on the image of the heavenly One.

Therefore it has been limpidly shown that the Prophet represents several meanings, according to the meanings of his name, which is interpreted according to the diverse places of the Scripture. Interpreted: as “the running away from adornment” (44), it indicated Adam and the common nature; as “the resting and the healing from God”, or “the toiling from God”, it indicates our Lord and God, according to the given explanation; and as “corn” and “gift from God” it indicates the grace of prophesying and the richness of the Ghost comprised in it. The “toiling of God” indicates the much toiling of the ones who make themselves servants of this true calling. And when it is interpreted as “their sadness” it indicates the Jew’s fury against the truth, namely their envy for the “foreign goods” which gives birth to the sadness in the ones dominated by it. This evil has become rooted in the Jew’s nature, who has been filled up with hatred towards God and people, and that’s why they do not aim but to break the nature, shamelessly, through blood and killings.

But due to the fact that our word has had a quick course, it has passed over the meaning of the three days road. This is because in the Scripture is said: “And Nineveh was a great city of God, of three days’ journey”<sup>590</sup>. If you wish, let’s

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<sup>590</sup> Jonah: 3: 3: KJB: “So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days’ journey.”; ROB: “And Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. And Nineveh was great city before the Lord; you needed three days to cross it through.”

complete a little what we have left outside. The three day's journey are the diverse way of living of the ones who walk the path of the Lord, or the ways of living which correspond to each of the general laws. And the general laws are: the natural one, the written one and the one of the grace. This is because to each one of these laws it corresponds a certain way of living and a certain course of the life, as also a special internal disposition produced by that law through the will of the ones who are under its power (45). For instance the natural law, when the rationality isn't overwhelmed by feeling, it persuades us without a special teaching to embrace all the kindred and of the same nation ones, because the nature itself teaches us to help the ones in need and to want all of us to everybody the same thing, which everyone wants to be done to himself by others (46). This thing was told to us by the Lord Himself: "As many you want to be done to you by the people, yourselves do it likewise to them"<sup>591</sup>. This is because the ones of whose nature is ruled by rationality, they have the same disposition (47). And the ones who have the same disposition, it is obvious that they have also the same behavior and the same course of their life, and of course they are united through a connection of affectivity, which gathers them all through a sole inclination of the will in the same rationality of the nature, in which there is not at all the division which rules now within nature due to the self-love of everyone.

And the written law, by restraining through the fear of punishments the without order impulses of the not-wise ones, it habituates them to reckon everybody as equals. Through this it is consolidated the force of the righteousness, than in time it

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<sup>591</sup> Matthew: 7: 12; Luke: 6: 35; KJB: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." // "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."; ROB: "But everything that you want the people to do to you, likewise do yourselves to them, for this are the Law and the prophets." // "But love your enemies and do good and lend, without hoping anything in return, and your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is good to the unthankful and evil ones."

becomes nature, transforming the fear of the soul in affection towards good which it is slowly strengthened through will, and the habit to clean themselves through forgetfulness of the ones from before in a habit which determines to be born in the same time with itself the love for others (48). And in this it consists the fulfilling of the law, all of them being united together through love. This is because the fulfilling of the law is the solidarity through love of all the ones who have been imparted of the same nature, bearing the rationality of the nature crowned by the sake of the love and beautifying the law of the nature with the adding of the sake<sup>592</sup>. This is because the law of the nature it is the natural rationality which obeyed its feeling to the modes<sup>593</sup> (49). And the written law, or the fulfilling of the written law, it is the natural rationality, which has taken in its help the reports of reciprocity with the ones of the same nation the spiritual rationality. That's why it says: "You shall love your neighbor as on yourself". But it doesn't say: "You shall have your neighbor as yourself". This is because the second one is shown only in the solidarity with the ones of the same nation towards maintaining the existence, and the first one it means the care for them regarding the happiness (50).

Finally the law of the grace it teaches the ones guided by it to imitate God in an unmediated manner, Who, is one can say so, He loved us more than on Himself, even we were enemies to Him due to our sin. He loved us so much, than He deigned to descend in our being, in an unchanged mode, He Who is in supra-existential mode above any being and nature, and to make Himself man and to be one of the men. Out of the same love He didn't refuse to appropriate our damnation and to deify us according to the grace insomuch than He made Himself, according to oikonomia and by nature, man. And He

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<sup>592</sup> The ones who love each other, they desire each other. The sake of something also presupposes a certain distance. But a certain distance is at anytime maintained between two persons, being given the fact that according to their being they cannot unite themselves. Therefore at anytime in love there is also sake. And the sake beautifies the desired one.

<sup>593</sup> The modes are always the modes of the virtues, steadfast images of moral or rational activity, being given the fact that the sin is opposite to the steadfast manhood.

did this to teach us not only to help amongst ourselves in a natural manner and also to love each other as on ourselves in a spiritual way, but also to take care of others more than of ourselves in a godlike manner and this to be the proof of the love for each other than, on the ground of our virtue, to be us ready to suffer the willing death for each other. "For there it is no other greater love than this, that somebody to put his soul for his friends"<sup>594</sup>.

Therefore the law of the nature is, to say it shortly, the natural rationality which obeyed its feeling towards removing the recklessness (the irrationality) through which it is maintained the division between the ones united by nature. And the written law is the natural rationality which, after the removal of the irrationality of the feeling, it has associated to itself also the spiritual love, through which it is sustained the reciprocity between the ones of the same nation. Finally, the law of the grace it is the rationality from above nature, which transforms the nature in an unchanged way<sup>595</sup> by deifying it and it shows in the people's nature as in an icon the not-comprised and above being and above nature archetype, and it provides the eternal happiness.

And if this is the meaning of the three laws, rightly the big city of God, namely the Church, or the soul of each one, it is at the end of a road of three days, as one which receives and comprises the righteousness of the nature, of the law and of the ghost (52). This is because in these laws is the whole adornment of the Church, as much as it is comprised in the

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<sup>594</sup> John: 15: 13: KJB: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."; ROB: "Greater love than this nobody has, that to put his soul for his friends."

<sup>595</sup> There is a rationality above nature. Let's not confound, as usual, the rational one to the natural one. Doubtlessly, the natural is rational, but not the only rational one. Rational is also the supra-natural one. Only the under-natural one or the counter-natural one they are irrational. Of course the supra-natural one is in a certain measure supra-rational. Namely in report to our "natural" rationality. We need a "supra-natural" rationality to see the rationality of the above nature ones. But our rationality has an affinity for the rationality of the truths from above nature. That's why by receiving the rationality from above nature, our nature, therefore also the natural rationality, it is not changed, and it is not diminished as it happened through sin.

width of the virtues, in the length of the knowledge and in the depth of the wisdom and of the mysterious knowledge of God (of the mystical Theology)<sup>596</sup>. Therefore let's not separate ourselves through the inward disposition from this city, as the Jew people, by loving our own body as a bower and by taking care of the body`s pleasure as of a gourd, lest by being pricked by the worm of the conscience, to wither our strayed affection towards pleasures and by coming upon us, through the unwilling trials the punishment for what we have done evil in our life, as a hot wind, to become us disgusted of life and to rebel ourselves against the godlike judgment.

This is because each of us, the ones defeated by the delusion of the material things, who enjoy the body`s pleasures, he receives as on a worm the word of God, which stings him through conscience, and chews his affection towards pleasure as a gourd root, for after the consummated forsaking of the light comprised in the words of the Ghost to wither its sinful work, and the wind with scorching heat, namely the remembering of the eternal torments, to burn up, as a pate, the beginning of the evilness` passions, from the baits which come through senses (53). Thus we will achieve the knowle3dge of the rationalities of the Providence and of the Judgment, which teach us to cherish the eternal ones more than the temporary ones, of which lack usually saddens the people (54). This is because the word of the Scripture shows that the man saddens himself for the bower and for the gourd, namely for the body and for the body`s pleasure, and that God takes care of Nineveh, it is obvious that what God reckons to be worthy of live it is more precious and more honorable than all the beloved and the expensive things of the people, either they somehow exist, or they don't exist, but only they seem to exist, consequently to wrong judgment, or to a prejudice, not having any rationality of their real existence, but being the fruit of the

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<sup>596</sup> The virtue it corresponds to the natural law. The virtue is wide and it corresponds to the written law and it is stretched, elongating the line of our sight. The wisdom and the mystical theology they correspond to the law of the grace and they are deep, deepening our sight in God.

hallucination which deludes the mind and it gives an empty shape to the ones which don't exist, but not also a real hypostasis to the passion.

### Scholia

1. In how many ways the name Jonah is interpreted.
2. In how many ways the name Joppa is interpreted.
3. How many things Johan symbolizes, spiritually understood.
4. Another meaning of the word Joppa, which is appropriate to the lonely individuals.
6. It is about a much agitated storm.
7. "Head" it is called here the prime teaching about monad, as beginning of any virtue; and the crevasses of the mountains are the thoughts of the cunning ghosts, in which our mind has sunk itself through disobedience.
8. "The lowest earth" it is the habit empty of any feeling of the knowledge of God and of any movement of virtuous life.
9. "Deep" (abyss, precipice) he calls the nescience which lays over the habit of the sin, upon which float, as upon an earth, the seas of the sin.
10. "Earth" he calls the callous habit in sin, and the "eternal latches", the passionate lusts after the material things, which keep enslaved the worst of the habits.
11. The "glimpse of light" it is the true knowledge, and the "life of the mortal ones" is the behavior worthy of the rational beings, of which the ones who are dominated by an evil habit they are lacked.
12. "Sea" he has called here our world within which the Lord came through body.
13. "Resting" it is the Lord, as the One Who delivers from the toils for virtue; "healing from God", like the doctor who heals the wound come through death; "the grace of God", as the One Who brings redemption; and, "toil of God", as the One Who receives our passions.

14. How our Lord and God is grace? See Nilus and do not let yourself to be shaken by the word “full of grace and of truth”<sup>597</sup>.

15. How Jonah symbolizes the grace of prophesying.

16. The patience of the saints it touches the attacking power of the cunning one.

17. The saints, by bodily suffering and willingly receiving the body’s death for truth, they procured to the gentiles a life of faith in ghost.

18. The helplessness according to the nature of the Saints it is a proof of the overwhelming godlike power. Through this power the Lord defeated the haughty devil.

19. The “emperor” is the natural law; the “throne”, the passionate habit of the senses; the “imperial vestment”, the clothing of the vain glory; the “sackcloth”, the crying out of the repentance; the “ashes”, the humble cogitation.

20. “People” he calls the ones who do mistake through rationality; “beasts”, the ones who do mistake through lust; “oxen” the ones who do mistake through wrath; and “seep” the ones who do mistake in contemplating the seen ones.

21. Nineveh it means also the soul of everyone.

22. The ones without which there doesn’t exist anything, are the time and the space, without which there doesn’t exist anything of the made ones.

23. The Church and the soul of each one, by having in them the rationalities of the virtue and of the knowledge which exceed the time and the nature, they have more than twelve myriads. This is because the rationality of the virtues doesn’t know the sin of the body, which is the left side; and the

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<sup>597</sup> Joel: 1: 14: KJB: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”; ROB: “And the Word made Himself body and He dwelled Himself amongst us and we saw His glory, glory like of the One Begotten out of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

rationality of the knowledge doesn't know the evilness of the soul, which is the right side<sup>598</sup>.

24. The cause of the virtues is God. And the knowledge with the work of this One it means the true transformation of the one who knows God, into ghost, consequently to a insistent habituation.

25. The natural rationality elevates, through the mediation of the virtues, the one who occupies himself with the doing, to the mind; and the mind it takes, through contemplation, on the one who wants the knowledge, to wisdom. But the irrational passion persuades the one who disregards the commandments to descend to feeling (sensation). And the end of this one is that the mind is lacked of pleasure.

26. Faithlessness he calls the rejection of the commandments; faith, the consent to them; darkness, the not-knowing of the good; light, its knowledge. Christ is called the being and the hypostasis of these ones; and devil, the all-evil habit, which gives birth to all evils.

27. Virtue he calls the all-dispassionate habit and callous in good, which hasn't anything contrary, neither on a side nor on another. This is because it bears the seal of God, which hasn't anything contrary.

28. If the rationality borders the being of each thing, no one of the things does not exceed itself through nature and doesn't remain below to himself. The border of the creatures it is that they to reach through desire at knowing their cause; and the measure it is to be they imitating the cause through living, as much as this is possible to the creatures.

29. When the ones who move themselves they bear their desire over their border and over their measure, they make their trip worthless, not reaching at God in Whom the movement of everybody's desire comes to an end, by receiving

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<sup>598</sup> Another specifying of the sin of the left side and of the right side. If the sin of the right side is the pride which is born out of the excess of the virtue, it is obvious that it is a sin of the soul.

the possession and the joy of God, Who is the final self-subsistent target of theirs.

30. Namely what is over the border and over the measure, and without border and without measure.

31. Namely through rationality.

32. The mind which stretches itself towards God through ecstasy, it leaves behind both the rationalities of the bodiless beings and the ones of the bodies. This is because it is not possible to somebody to look in the same time at God and at something out of the ones which come after God.

33. How Jonah symbolizes the Jewish people.

34. How Jonah is interpreted when symbolizes and rebukes in himself, as type, the Jewish people.

35. Stronger defeated the Lord the power of the tyrant, by luring him with the weakness of the body, then the devil on Adam by promising to him the dignity of the godhead.

36. The Lord is worm to the seedless body; and sun both to the sunset in the tomb, through which the Word descended as man underground, and also like the One Who through nature and according to the nature light and God.

37. The hot wind symbolizes not only the trials but also the forsaking by God, consequently to which the godlike gifts weren't destined anymore to the Jews.

38. Characteristic to the anger it is to not recognize that God is the Maker of the virtues and of the Nature, as also characteristic is to the vain glory to divide the nature for weakening it; and the haughtiness it is the brood of both of them, being a sinful habit composed of the willing denial of God and of ignoring the equal honor of the ones of the same nature.

39. The spiritual kinship which is done into ghost, it detaches the affection of the will from body and it ties it at God, through sake.

40. Night he calls the symbols of the law under which there is the law; in these symbols the soul cannot find its enlightenment, if they aren't spiritually understood.

41. The gentiles` Church was called great city consecrated to God, for the great and not measured by any word mystery of the godlike oikonomia.

42. According to the being the truth precedes the types; though according to the emergence, the types precede in time the truth. Therefore, because Jonah depicted in himself in an anticipated manner the truth like type, by remaining for three days and for three nights in the whale`s belly, the Scripture by speaking about "other three days", it understands through the three days of the burial and of the resurrection of the Lord, after which the straying and the nescience of the gentiles will be destroyed.

43. Namely it resurrects the faith.

44. The short listing of the interpretations of the Jonah`s name as this name it refers itself through its meanings to diverse persons and ways of life.

45. Namely of the law.

46. The effect of the natural law it is the voluntary affection of everybody towards everybody.

47. Definitions through which it is presented the characteristic feature of the natural law.

48. The written law, by impeding the injustice through fear, it accustoms the man towards which is right, and in time it transforms the habit in a loving of righteousness affection, which gives birth to a firm habit towards good, which produces the forgetfulness of the evilness from before.

49. Definitions which show the work of each of the mentioned laws.

50. Having your neighbor as on yourself, it is characteristic to the care of the one who occupies himself only with his life and this it hangs on the natural law. Loving your neighbor as on yourself it means taking care also of his happiness through virtues, and this is commanded by the written law. At last, loving your neighbor more than yourself it is characteristic to the law of the ghost.

51. Short definitions which present the characteristic through which each of the three days commits the good things.

52. The road of the three days it is the consummation through the three laws of the ones who guards them by fulfilling their entire righteousness.

53. Another more subtle meaning of the bower and of the gourd, of the worm, of the hot wind and of the sun.

54. The one who is impeded in the body's impulses towards pleasure, he learns how to know the rationalities of the Providence, which keeps in rein the inflammable matter of the passion. And the one who endures painful kicks in his body, he learns how to know the rationalities of the Judgment, which clean him, through unwilling toils, of the defilements from before.

### **Question no. 65**

*In the Second Book of the Kings has been written: "And great famine came in the days of David for three years, consecutively. And David searched for the face of the Lord. And the Lord said: "Upon Saul and upon his house the injustice, for he killed the Gibeonites". And David summoned the Gibeonites and said to them: "What am I going to do to you and with what to reconcile you for you to be blessing the inheritance of the Lord". And they said towards the king: The man who crushed us and reckoned to eradicate us, we want to kill him for not being him in any land of Israel. Give us seven men out of his sons and we will hang them by their necks to the Lord din the mount of Saul". And the king too the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the mistress of Saul, whom she born to Arial, and gave them on the hand of the Gibeonites. And they hanged them by the necks in the mountain before the Lord, and there the seven ones fell together. And they killed them in the days of the beginning of the reaping, at the beginning of the barley's reaping. And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took the sackcloth and paid it down of a rock, until the rain of God from heavens fell over them.*

*And they fulfilled everything that the king commanded. And after these things God had mercy on the country*<sup>599</sup>. *Why after the Saul's death was asked for expiation from David, famine mastering over the country until he gave the seven men from the seed of Saul to be killed by Gibeonites? Which is the meaning of these words and how must we understand them spiritually?*

### **Answer**

The exact knowledge of the words of the Ghost is unveiled only to the ones worthy of the Ghost, namely only to the ones who through a long cultivating of the virtues, cleaning their mind of the soot of the passions, they receive the knowledge if the godlike ones which is imprinted and it is placed in them from the first touch, like a face in a clean and transparent mirror (1). But the ones whose life is stun as mine is by the stains of the passions, they barely are able to deduce out of some probable reckonings the knowledge of the godlike ones, without daring to penetrate it and to express it in details. And I limpidly know, honorable Father, that because you endured them, you know the godlike ones and you know out of experience better than I, who cannot speak anything about the godlike ones on the ground of their suffering (2). Although neither this toil of mine is to be condemned, especially by you who have commanded me and have imposed to me this toil to speak about the ones from above my power.

Therefore Saul it means in this place of the Holy Scripture the law which reigns with its letter and through the power of the bodily commandment over the bodily Jews (3), or the bodily mode or meaning of the law, which reigns over the ones who let themselves to be guided only by the letter<sup>600</sup>. This is because Saul is interpreted according to this meaning as "the asked hell". The people of the Jews, namely, by choosing the life

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<sup>599</sup> II Samuel: 21: 1-14; KJB / II Kings: 21: 1-14; ROB.

<sup>600</sup> This interpretation of Saul can be also found in: Theological Heads II, 52-53; G.P. 90, 1143; The Romanian Philokalia II, p. 186.

of pleasure instead of the Kingdom and of a life lived virtuously in the Ghost of God, they asked to be reigned over by the hell, namely by the nescience, instead of knowledge. This is because everyone who fell off the godlike love, he is dominated through pleasure by the law which cannot guard any godlike commandment, or he doesn't even want to guard it.

After another interpretation, Saul it means "something given with interest" or "lent with interest". This is because the written law wouldn't be given to the ones who have received it to be to them as a wealth, but to prepare them for the expected promise. That's why God by giving the kingdom to Saul, in the covenant made with this one He didn't promise the eternal kingdom. This is because everything that is lent doesn't become to the borrower as his own wealth, but cause of work and toil towards gathering another wealth. And Rizpah, the mistress of Saul, it is interpreted as "the road of the mouth". Road of the mouth is though the learning of the law only by uttering the words, namely its bringing into home illegitimately. This thing is done by the one who cultivates only the bodily serving of the law, out of which no good or pious fruit is born to him (4). This is because the ones who occupies himself only with the bodily part of the law by learning the words, he doesn't have this serving in a legit union with the rationality. That's why what is born to him is worthy of damnation and reproach. This is because out of the illegitimate mating with Rizpah are born Armoni and Mephibosheth, which means: "their anathema" and "the shame of their mouth". In fact Armoni, according to another meaning, it is interpreted as "anathema". "Their anathema" it the corruption of the sin with the mouth brought by working the passions (5). And Mephibosheth is the unnatural movement of the mind towards evil and towards the contriver of evilness thought of the mind, which is called the shame of the mind.

Or "their anathema" it is the place in which the nature is being held towards rebuking, namely this world (6), which has become the land of the death and of the corruption due to

the sin and in which the first man fell off the Paradise after transgressing the godlike commandment. This world is born through the will's affection for pleasure, namely through the worldly lust, by fulfilling the law only through uttering the words, the one who doesn't cross through with the mind to the godlike beauty and greatness of the ghost from inside the law's letter. And "the shame of their mouth" is the cultivation within mind of the loving of world and of body thoughts. This is because immediately that out of the seen image of the bodily law or of its letter uses to be born the world through the affection of the will, namely the loving of world disposition, it is born also the cultivation with the mind of the loving of world and of body thoughts (7).

Or again "their anathema" is the ugly, earthly and shapeless movement of the passions, and "the shame of their mouth" is the movement of the mind which adds to the passions an image and is contrives a pleasant to the senses beauty (8). This is because without the contriving power of the mind the passion isn't brought towards forging a shape. Consequently the one who limits the meaning of a godlike promise only to the law's letter, he has the teaching of the law only as a mistress and not as a legit wife. That's why, necessarily, such a teaching gives birth to anathema and to shame, not because of itself, but due to the one who takes is, namely the one who unites himself with it in a bodily manner. This is because the one who believes that God ordered through law the sacrifices and the holidays, the Saturdays and the full moons, for the caressing and the resting of the body, surely he will fall under the power of the passions and under the shame of the filthiness of their defiled thoughts; that one will be the servant of the rotting world and of the occupying with the bodily thoughts; also of the matter and of the shape of the passions (9), not being able to honor anything else but the things submitted to corruption. That's why one like this sinfully gives birth to Michal, who at her turn will give birth to the five sons of Adriel. Michal it is interpreted as "satiating the throat",

which is not else but the covetousness of the belly. This one by understanding the commandment in a Jewish manner, give birth to Adriel the abusive modes of using the senses. Adriel is the contemplative part of the soul, because this name is interpreted as “godlike power”, or “strong help”, or “powerful vision”. And these ones aren't but the mind created in the image of God, but then persuaded to mate itself with the covetousness of the belly, namely with the law's letter. This is because being the mind persuaded by the law's letter that the caressing of the body is a godlike commandment, it doesn't accept but this one towards cohabitation, reckoning it as godlike and honoring it as a daughter of the law which reigns<sup>601</sup>. And so it gives birth out of herself to the abusive ways of using the senses (10). This is because once the contemplative part of the soul by listening to the law's letter embraces the bodily caressing in order of cohabiting with it<sup>602</sup>, it starts using the contrary to the nature senses, not allowing anymore the usage of any work of the sense conform to the nature.

Therefore the one who occupies himself with serving the law in bodily manner (11) he has the knowledge of the godlike ones as a mistress and not as a legit wife, and he makes to be born out of it the “anathema” (the damnation) for working the passions and the “shame” of the ugly thoughts from within them; and Michal (the daughter of Saul), namely out of the covetousness of the belly, she gains as grandsons, the modes of the abusive using of the senses (41). Due to this reason he uses to kill the rationalities and the thoughts which are in the nature of the things, namely the ones which are conform to the nature, as some Gibeonites. This is because the Gibeonites are interpreted as “mountain men” or “floating in the sky” (meteorites) indicating of course the higher rationalities of the natural contemplation or our thoughts conform to the

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<sup>601</sup> The law (*λόγος*) is in the Greek language of masculine gender, therefore it can symbolize Saul.

<sup>602</sup> The mind (*νους*) is in the Greek language of masculine gender, and the caressing (*τρυφή*) it is of feminine gender. Thus the image of the conjugal mating is fitted to them.

nature<sup>603</sup>. These ones are killed by Saul and by anybody who imitates Saul through his internal disposition, through the fact that, allowing himself to be deceived to keep only the letter of the law, he rejects and perverts the according to the nature rationalities. This is because nobody can receive a rationality or a thought if he is paying attention to a bodily serving. This is because the symbols aren't the same thing with the nature. And if the symbols aren't the same thing with the nature it is clear that the one who lacks himself of the law's symbols as prototypes, he is never able to see the things according to their nature. That's why he foolishly rejects the rationalities according to the nature (12). He doesn't think that must be defended them who were spared by Joshua<sup>604</sup>, and for whom That One also waged a fearsome war against the five kings who rushed upon them, war in which the sky itself also fought through stones and hail<sup>605</sup>, together with Joshua against the ones who rose themselves upon the Gibeonites; the ones on whom the embodied Word made them carry woods and water to the godlike tent, namely to the Holy Church, symbolized through the tent<sup>606</sup> (13). Because this is Jesus Who killed the passionate modes (of activity) and the thoughts, which rose up against them. This is because always Jesus, the Word (the Rationality) of God, He protects the rationalities of the natural contemplation, making them to carry wood and water to the godlike tent of His mysteries, namely to procure the matter which is lit by the light of the godlike knowledge and to give the occasion for cleaning the stains of the passion and for increasing the life into Ghost. This is because without the

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<sup>603</sup> The rationalities and the thoughts (*λόγοι καὶ λοισμοί*) are in the Greek language of masculine gender.

<sup>604</sup> Joshua Nun: 9: 3 and the followings.

<sup>605</sup> Joshua Nun: 10: 5 and the followings.

<sup>606</sup> Joshua Nun: 9: 23; KJB: "Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."; ROB: "That's why be you cursed! Not to cease to be in bondage, as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God".

natural contemplation is not sustained in anybody and in any way the power of the mysteries.

But is it not wrong nor against the awe to be said also that the Gibeonites symbolize the fate of the gentiles which come to Jesus, the fulfiller of the godlike promises, and Who saves them by teaching them to carry wood and water, namely to carry on the shoulders of the virtues, through deeds, the mysterious and savior rationality of the cross and of the godlike rebirth through water; and to procure to the godlike ark of the pious faith through doing the killing of the earthly limbs<sup>607</sup>, as some woods, and through contemplation the overflowing of the conscience into ghost, as a water (14).

Therefore either they symbolize the rationalities of the natural contemplation, or the gentiles saved through faith, the Gibeonites the one who decided to live in Jewish manner only according to the law's letter have as enemy who fights against the one who is saved. This is because him, by serving to the belly as to God<sup>608</sup> and presenting his shame as a worthy of honor things, he clings sticks himself to the reproachable passions as they would be godlike and that's why he doesn't take care but of the temporary goods, namely of matter and form, and of the fivefold work of the sense which are used bad; of the first ones as of some sons of Rizpah the mistress, and of the last ones, as of some nephews from the dishonored daughter Michal. And the feeling (the work of the senses) being united with the matter and with the form, on one hand gives birth to the passion, and on the other hand it kills and eradicates the according to nature cogitations (15). This is because the rationality of the nature cannot emerge together

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<sup>607</sup> Colossians: 3: 5: KJB: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:.."; ROB: "Therefore kill your limbs, the earthly ones: the fornication, the uncleanness, the passion, the evil lust and the covetousness, which are worshipping of idols,"  
<sup>608</sup> Philippians: 3: 19: KJB: "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."); ROB: "The end of these ones is the perdition. The belly is their god, and their glory is into their shame, as ones who have in mind the earthly ones."

with the passion, as neither the passion can be born together with the nature<sup>609</sup> (16).

Therefore the ones who hangs himself only on the Scripture's letter as Saul did, on one hand he rejects the rationalities according to the nature, and on the other hand he doesn't believe in the calling of the Gentiles mysteriously announced from before, searching in the law, as he understands it, only the pleasure of the body. And while this bodily disposition dominates over the ones who, by understanding the law in this manner, they live only according to the senses, it doesn't emerge in it the hunger of the spiritual knowledge (17). This is because the hunger is the absence of the goods which have been known once through the experience itself and the total lack of the spiritual goods which maintain the soul. This is because how somebody would reckon as hunger or as lack the absence of the ones which he has never known? That's why, while Saul live the hunger doesn't emerge, because it wasn't felt the lack of the spiritual knowledge while the letter of the law was living and reigning over the earthly with understanding Jews. But when the ray of the evangelical grace starts shining and David take the reigning over the spiritual with the understanding ones, which happens after Saul's death, namely after the end of the letter (because David is interpreted as "contempt" and "the one strong at seeing", the first meaning being fit to the Jews' point of view, because the letter overwhelms the ghost, and the second one out of the Christians' point of view, because the ghosts overcomes the letter) (18), then is being felt the hunger of the spiritual knowledge. Namely the faithful people commonly and the everyone's soul feel it, when they choose the outer wrapping of the letter instead of the mysterious contemplation into ghost and reckon, so saying, the soul of the Scripture less honorable than its body (19). This is because it truly becomes hungry the people of the ones who believe and who have known the truth,

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<sup>609</sup> The passion is contrary to the nature, and the nature existing always according to a rationality, then the passion is contrary also to the rationality.

as also the soul of everyone, when they fall off the spiritual contemplation through grace and they reach in the bondage of the forms and of the letter's images, which doesn't nourish the mind with the glorious meanings, but it fills up the feeling with passionate hallucinations through the bodily figures of the Scripture's symbols. Due to this reason one says that the hunger of the knowledge of God it is prolonged "for three years consecutively". This is because all the ones who doesn't appropriate the spiritual understanding of the Scripture, he rejects on one hand, together with the Scripture, like the Jews do, also the natural law, and on the other hand he doesn't know either the law of the grace, through which it is given the godhead to the ones guided by it.

Consequently the hunger of the three years it means the lack of knowledge which comes out of the three laws, out of the natural one, out of the written one and out of the one of the grace, corresponding to each one, to the ones who searches through contemplation for their higher meanings. This is because he cannot cultivate at all the science of the Scriptures the one who rejects the natural rationalities of the things in his contemplation and he pays attention only to the material symbols, and not thinking himself at any spiritual higher meaning (20). This is because while it dominates only the historical side of the Scripture the domination of the temporary ones upon the understanding it still hasn't ceased, but even if Saul dies, his children and his nephews are still living, who are seven in number. In other words out of the bodily and temporary serving of the law it is usually born within the loving of the body ones, due to the mentioned reason, a passionate disposition, which has an encouraging in straying the commandment shown in symbols (21). Due to this reason I reckon that there was no famine in the days of Saul, namely it wasn't felt the lack of the spiritual knowledge during the serving according to the body of the law, but during the time of the evangelical grace. This is because only now after the kingdom of the letter has passed, we hunger when we don't

understand the Scripture, because we don't taste the spiritual serving into ghost, as it is appropriate to the Christians. And when we, like David, awake ourselves to the feeling and we are looking at the face of the Lord (22), we limpidly understand that the grace of the knowledge has been taken from us because we haven't received that rationalities according to the nature, for entering at the mysterious contemplation into ghost, but we are still stuck to the bodily thought form the law's letter.

"And David, says the Scripture, looked at the face of the Lord. And the Lord said: Over the house of Saul the injustice, for he killed the Gibeonites". David is every scrutinizing mind, which lives into Christ (23) and it is always looking at the face of the Lord. And face of the Lord is the contemplation and the true knowledge of the godlike ones, which being sought by somebody through virtue, he finds out the reason due to which it lacks (the knowledge) and he receives the commandment to give to death the five sons of his daughter, Michal. Saul is interpreted as I have said, through the "asked hell" or "the desired nescience". And the "desired nescience" it means of course the law's letter, namely the domination of the bodily serving of the law; or the mind bodily glued only to the matter of the letter through senses (24). Rizpah it is interpreted as "the way of the mouth", which it means the learning of the law only by uttering the words. This is because "the way of the mouth", but not also of the understanding, it is truly used only by the ones who are stranger to the spiritual contemplation of the law. And sons of Rizpah are Armoni and Mephibosheth. Armoni it is interpreted as "their anathema", which it means the corruption of the sinful work of the passion through body, or the place, namely the world, within which the punishment for transgressing the commandment is suffered, in other words the affection out of the pleasure for the world, or maybe the earthly movement, ugly and deformed of the passions. And Mephibosheth it is interpreted "the shame of their body", what it means the unnatural movement of the mind towards sin, namely the contriving of passions thinking, or may the

cultivation of the loving of world and of body thoughts, or, at last, the movement of the mind which it gives image to the passions and forges pleasant beauties for the senses. These are sons, which are born by the written law and the mind which sticks only with the law's letter, out of serving the law only by uttering the words. And Michal, the daughter of Saul, it is interpreted "the satiation of the throat", which it means the covetousness of the belly. This is because the law's letter, which it closes in its symbols the ones who serve to it, and the mind which limits the law in a literary manner only to the images, for the sake of the bodily life, they cannot give birth but to the delight towards the material things. And the five sons of Michal, the Saul's daughter, are the five passionate modes of the evil usage of the five senses, which she beget to Adriel, namely of the contemplative side, the affection which serves through law only to the body, by caressing it.

On these two sons of Saul (namely the matter and the form) (25), and on these five nephews of his (namely the five modes of the abusive movement of the senses towards matter and form, or the passionate and unnatural interweaving of the senses with the sensitive things, or with the things submitted to the time and to the flowing), after the Saul's death (namely after the passing of the bodily serving of the law and after the passing of the nescience), David surrender them, by the godlike commandment, to the Gibeonites, who live on the height of the Saul's mountains (namely of the spiritual contemplation), to be killed. In other words the spiritual law, or the mind, it surrenders the general affection of the things from under the time towards the bodily and the sensitive part of the symbols, to the rationalities and to the higher thoughts of the natural contemplation, to be killed and eradicated.

This is because if somebody didn't discern before in a natural manner<sup>610</sup> the godlike and spiritual things from symbols (26) and is consequently hasn't been born within him

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<sup>610</sup> Φυσικῶς. Out of the scholium no. 23 one can see that this is about the natural contemplation.

the sake to come close only with the mind to the beauty of the spiritual ones, by totally drawing out the feeling (the work of the senses) from the godlike deeps, he cannot liberate himself from the bodily variety of the images. And whilst he searches for these ones, by sticking himself to the letter, he rightly doesn't find alleviation to the hunger of knowledge. This is because he has condemned himself to eat the earth of the Scripture, or the body, like the alluring snake, but not the meaning or the ghost and the soul of the Scripture, namely the heavenly and the angelic bread (I mean the spiritual contemplation and knowledge, the one into Christ, of the Scriptures), food which God gives it plentifully to the ones who love Him, as it was written: "Bread from heaven I gave them, the bread of the angels the man ate"<sup>611</sup>.

And if we want to feed ourselves with the godlike grace, we must eradicate the bodily understanding, the one according to the senses, of the Scripture, which give birth to the passions and to the affectionate disposition towards the temporary and passing ones (or to the passionate work of the senses, directed towards the sensitive ones). Let's eradicate also these ones as some sons and nephews of Saul through the natural contemplation, into the height of the godlike rationalities (words), as on a mountain. This is because whether according to the godlike word, upon Saul and upon his house it hangs the injustice, because he killed the Gibeonites, it is obvious that the law understood only according to the latter, namely the Jewish people and everyone who imitates that one in what concerns the understanding (because these ones were called by the Scripture as the house of Saul) it commits injustice toward the truth. This is because these ones limits the meaning of the law only to the letter and he doesn't receive the natural contemplation, which it helps to discovering that knowledge deeply hidden into letter and mediates between images and

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<sup>611</sup> Psalms: 78: 25: KJB: "Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full."; 77: 29: ROB: "Angelic bread the man ate. He sent plentifully sent meat to them." This interpretation of the angels' bread to be seen also at Origen: De oration, G.P. 11, 515.

truth, detaching the ones who are guided by itself from the first ones and driving them towards the last one, but he totally rejects this one and he removes it from the mysterious knowledge of the godlike ones.

Therefore the ones who search for the sights of the godlike ones they must kill this bodily, temporary and passing understanding of the law through the natural contemplation, for reaching at the height of the knowledge as on a mountain. “And David called, he says, the Gibeonites and said to them: What will I do to you and with what to reconcile you, to be you blessing the inheritance of the Lord? And they said towards the kind: That man who crushed us, and who persecuted us and who reckoned to eradicate us, let us to destroy him, to not stay anymore in the land of Israel. Give us seven men of his sons and we will hang them by the neck to the Lord in the Saul’s mountain. And the king took the two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, on Armoni and Mephibosheth, and on the five sons of Michal, the Saul’s daughter, whom she born to Adriel. And they gave them on the hands of the Gibeonites. And they hanged them by the neck on the mountain before the Lord. And there the seven ones fell together. And they killed them in the days of the reaping, at the beginning of the reaping of the barley”<sup>612</sup>. Where do we find in history that the Gibeonites would have eradicated Saul “to not stay anymore within the land of Israel”? Because Maribaal, the Jonathan’s son, son of Saul, was saved by king David<sup>613</sup>, as many others out of Saul’s family, as also it is shown in the books of Chronicles<sup>614</sup>. And how the Gibeonites could say, that by taking seven men out of the Saul’s seed: “we will destroy him, to not be him anymore in

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<sup>612</sup> II Samuel: 21: 2-9: KJB; II Kings: 21: 2-9: ROB.

<sup>613</sup> II Samuel: 21: 7: KJB; II Kings: 21: 7: ROB. But there Jonathan’s son is called also Mephibosheth.

<sup>614</sup> I Chronicles: 12: 2: KJB: “They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul’s brethren of Benjamin.”; ROB: “They were archers, and they were throwing stones both with the right hand and with the left hand and they were shooting arrows out of bows and they were part of Benjamin people, Saul’s brothers, namely.”

the land of Israel”, since that one dies many years before? As one can see it has been mixed in the historical record something meaningless to give us the impulse of searching the higher meaning of the written ones. Therefore eradicate the bodily meaning of the Scripture, namely Saul, from all over the land of Israel, the ones who actually kills, through the natural contemplation, as through some Gibeonites, the greedy and bodily affection towards the fickle and flowing matter, affection born within the soul out of the written law. That one kills, as some sons and nephews of Saul, the descended meaning of the law, through the mediation of the natural contemplation on the height of the knowledge as on a mountain, and he unveils before the Lord through confession, the bodily understanding of the law from before. This is for like this it can be understood the “hanging by the neck before the Lord”, by the loving of learning ones. Thos ones bring out to light, through knowledge, the wrong understanding that they had regarding the law taken according to the letter (27). But everyone who killed the bodily understanding the law, of course he killed and eradicated the letter of the law “not not stay anymore within all the land of Israel”, namely within all the rationality of the spiritual contemplation (28). This is because Israel is interpreted as “mind which sees God”. But it is obvious that the bodily side of the law cannot be at all in the spiritual contemplation of the ones who have chosen the ghost instead of the letter. This is because, as it was said, “the Ghost is God and the ones who worship Him they ought to worship Him in ghost and in truth”<sup>615</sup>, and not in letter. This is because the letter it kills, and the ghost gives life<sup>616</sup>. Due to this reason what it uses to

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<sup>615</sup> John: 4: 24: KJB: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”; ROB: “God is Ghost and the ones who worship Him must worship Him in ghost and in truth.”

<sup>616</sup> II Corinthians: 3: 7: KJB: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”; ROB: “The One Who made us worthy of being servant of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the ghost; because the letter kills, but the ghost makes alive.”

kill it must be killed through the life-maker ghost. Because there is impossible to exist and to work together the bodily part and the godlike part of the law, namely the letter and the ghost, since cannot work together what destroys the life with what destines it by nature (2).

Therefore by reckoning this out of an historical perspective, what the Scripture says doesn't correspond to the truth. This is because how the Gibeonites eradicated Saul from all over the land of Israel, since many descendants of his family are amongst people? But by spiritually understanding these things, we clearly find out that the written law, namely the bodily order of serving in symbols is totally abolished through the mediation of the natural contemplation into the height of the knowledge. This is because where the circumcision of the body lasts anymore when the law is spiritually understood? Where the Sabbaths and the beginnings of the months are? Where the feasts of the holidays are? Where the order of the sacrifices, of the resting of the land and all the other prescriptions of the bodily serving of the law are? This is because by considering the things in a natural manner, we know that the consummation doesn't consist in cutting something off the wholeness according to the nature left by God (30). This is because the consummation doesn't stay in the masterly diminishing of the nature and in the rejection, through the contriving, of what it has been given to it from God according to the rationality of the creation. Thus we would reckon that the craftsmanship is stronger than God is in strengthening the righteousness and we would consider that the masterly diminishing of the nature right wholeness of a diminished righteousness according to the creation (30). But out of the typical place occupied by the cut off little piece we learn to do in a spiritual way (a gnostic way) the circumcision of the passionate disposition of the soul, for the leaning of our will to fuller conform itself to the nature, correcting thus the passionate law of the nature (of the conceiving) added later. This is because the mysterious (mystic) circumcision it consists

in the total loosing of the passionate affection for the birth (conceiving) emerged later<sup>617</sup> (31). And the Saturday (the Sabbath) it is the full ceasing of the of the passions and the total stopping of the mind's movements towards the created ones, as also the consummated passing to God<sup>618</sup> (32). The one who has than reached at God, as much as it is possible to the man, through virtue and knowledge, he must not cogitate, as to some woods<sup>619</sup>, to some matter which lights up the passions, neither to gather anymore the rationalities of the nature, to not dogmatize as the Hellenes do, a God which delights Himself with the passions or it is measured with the borders

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<sup>617</sup> About circumcision see also the Gnostic Heads I, 40-41, The Romanian Philokalia, volume II, p. 137; G.P. 90, 1096 and Ambigua, G.P. 91, 1932-3. There I translated: περὶ τὴν γένεσιν (about genesis (E. l. t.'s n.)) toward the ones which are born and perish, being influenced by the interpretation done by Hans Urs von Balthasar. But because out of here one can see that the law of this γένεσις it is later introduced in creation, it must mean the passionate mode of the birth or the passion interweaved with it and not the genesis of the becoming generally, or the ones who are born and perish. It is επίκτητον or επίσακτον (achieved (E. l. t.'s n.)) added to nature, and doesn't essentially existentially depend on the nature and through its cutting off isn't removed something characteristic to the nature, but rather the will is being conformed to the nature.

<sup>618</sup> About Sabbath see also Gnostic Heads I, 35-39, 51-60, II, 64-65. Generally, also in those places we find the same threefold gradation in the mystical interpretation of the Saturday: 1. the ceasing from committing sin; 2. the ceasing from activities directed towards creatures; 3. the mind's crossing through to God. But in the Gnostic Heads we find between the first stop and the second stop one more: the ceasing of the natural activity of the senses, when only the mind it remains active in the natural contemplation of the rationalities from within things (I 38). Evagrius said: "The Sabbath is the appeasement of the natural soul which doesn't cross the borders of the nature" (Gnostic Heads IV, 44, Frankenberg p. 291). In conformity to its immanentism, Evagrius doesn't interpret the Saturday as an exceeding of the nature's borders. The commentary of Baboi interprets this head like this: "The ones who through moral living they have reached to that natural tranquility, than the soul doesn't let itself to be attracted by the earthly ones, they preserve that natural order and they do not cross anymore over the natural border of their rational thinking, which God placed it to them at the creation, but they preserve it carefully inside themselves towards their own happiness".

While to Saint Maximos the Confessor the Saturday symbolizes also a passing of the soul beyond everything to God, to Evagrius it is only a coming back of the nature within its own borders, from the deviations into sin. According to Saint Maximos the Confessor the Saturday symbolizes more than the circumcision, which is the removal of everything that was added in an evil manner to the nature; to Evagrius it isn't anything more.

<sup>619</sup> Numbers: 15: 32. Evagrius still used the type of the man who, by gathering firewood on Saturday, he was burnt (to be understood in the oven of the passions). (Prognostic Heads IV, 26, Frankenberg, 281).

(definitions) of the nature<sup>620</sup>. This is because then God is not called but only by the consummated silence (33) and He is not represented but by the total nescience through exceeding (ἢ κα ὑπεροχη νάγνωσια<sup>621</sup>)<sup>622</sup>.

At the beginning of the months we say that there are the diverse enlightenments which meet us on the road of the days lives through virtue and knowledge (34), with the help of which we look in the same time over all ages and we fulfill the received year of the Lord<sup>623</sup> “adorned with the crown of the goodness”<sup>624</sup>. And the crown of the kindness is the clean faith adorned with the high thoughts the dogmas and with the spiritual cogitations, as with some precious gems and crowning the mind which loves God, as on a head (35). Or better said, the crown of the kindness is (36) the word of God Himself, Who with the diversity of the modes of the Providence and of the Judgment, namely through the restraint from the willing passions and by enduring the unwilling ones (37) it surrounds the mind as a forehead and through the impartation of the grace of the deification it makes the mind more beautiful than Himself.

Among holydays, the first one (38) it is the symbol of the active philosophy, which brings the ones guided by itself out of the Egypt of the sin to virtue; the second one (39) it is the way of the natural contemplation into ghost, which brings to God as a first fruit of the reaping the pious knowledge about things; the third one symbolizes the mystery of the theology (of the knowledge of God (40)), by embracing the aptitude (the habit) of knowing all the spiritual rationalities from within creatures, the

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<sup>620</sup> For here one can be see that the Saturday symbolizes the elevating even above the contemplation of the rationalities from within world.

<sup>621</sup> “or even the supreme nescience” (E. l. t.’s n.).

<sup>622</sup> The Saturday therefore symbolizes also the apophatic theology.

<sup>623</sup> Isaiah: 61: 2: KJB: “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;”; ROB: “To announce a year of mercifulness of the Lord and a day of revenge of our God;”

<sup>624</sup> Psalms: 65: 11: KJB: “Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.”; 64: 12: ROB: “You will bless the crown of the year of Your kindness and Your plains will be filled with fat fruits”.

perfect sinless through grace on the ground of the embodied Word and the immortal and consummated in good not-changeability, as one which is interweaved with trumpets, with sacrifice of the reconciliation and with building up of tents<sup>625</sup>.

I reckon that this is a meaning of the honoring the days. This is because God didn't command to be honored the Saturday, the beginning of the months and the holydays because He wanted to be honored certain days by the people. In this way He would have taught them through the commandment of the law to serve to the creature instead the Maker, determining them to imagine that the days are venerable by nature and that's why they must worship the days (41). But God indicated symbolically that He is the One Who must be honored through those days. This is because He is the Saturday, as the One Who is the repose of the soul after the toils into body and the peace after the endeavors for righteousness (42)<sup>626</sup>. He is also the peace because He liberates the ones who are held in the bitter slavery of the sin. But He is also the Pentecost, as beginning and end (final target) of the things and like rationality (word) into which everything is comprised through nature (44). This is because if the Pentecost falls after the period of the first week it is a fivefold tenth. But this doesn't mean that the nature of the created ones, which according to its rationality is fivefold, due to the senses, after the natural crossing of the times and of the ages it will dwell itself into the One according to nature God, by not having any

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<sup>625</sup> The trumpets announce the knowledge, the sacrifice it brings the cleaning of sins, and the building of the tent it means the stabilizing of the body to not be broken anymore.

<sup>626</sup> This meaning of the Saturday we do not find it so clearly in the Gnostic Heads. From here it seems that the Gnostic Heads are written before Answers towards Thalassius and not after, like Urs von Balthasar believes. In Ambigua it is said about this Saturday something similar: it is "the great day of the godlike resting, which, according to Genesis, it hasn't either beginning or end or genesis; it is the showing above border and measure according to the measure of the ones defined through measure; it is the endless identity of the not-comprised and unwritten around according to the iota of the ones which can be comprised and written around" (G.P. 91, 1932). Therefore the Sunday isn't only something negative, only the stopping from the natural ones, but also the emergence of the godlike life within man, or better said even the resting from the natural ones isn't but the work of God.

edge<sup>627</sup>, because in God there is no interval, because some theologian say that the Word is a Monad which widens Himself as Providence advancing in the ten commandments. But when the nature will be united according to the grace with the Word, there won't be the ones without which there nothing exists<sup>628</sup>, coming to an end also the movement which transforms (alters) the ones who are moved by nature. This is because the bordered stability in which there necessarily is the movement of the ones which move themselves, it must receive an end through the coming of the endless stability in which to be rested the movement of all the ones which move themselves<sup>629</sup>. This is because where a border according to the nature is there also is a movement which transforms the ones which are within that content. And where is no border, of course there won't be any movement which to transform the ones comprised there<sup>630</sup>.

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<sup>627</sup> To reach at that edge.

<sup>628</sup> The time and the space.

<sup>629</sup> This world of all the things and beings it is a stability between two borders. (For instance between birth and death). When the latter border has been reached by a being, this being ceases to exist, namely that being has passed beyond border. But in God the beings have no border anymore, and therefore they have not a limited stability anymore, but a borderless stability.

<sup>630</sup> By the fact that any created thing of being have two borders it must cross the distance from one border to another. This interval (*διάστασις*) which the being must cross it, it keeps the being in movement. The fact that it has an edge which makes it to move, but also to die, or to be transformed in something else when the movement brings it to its ultimate border. But in God there is no edge for anything. Therefore in Him the creature doesn't die or isn't being transformed; in Him there is an internal stability. On the other hand, not being Him comprised between two borders, not being in Him one or more intervals to be crossed through, in Him there properly-said is no movement. We make here two observations. The First one: the stability (*στάσις*) it has here other meaning that the one of petrifying. It is a stability in with the meaning of persisting in the own being. It is therefore a stability which doesn't exclude the consummation. So are synthesized the resting and the movement (Ambigua, G.P. 91, 1221: God neither moves Himself nor stays). Another observation: the interval is both what is comprised inside two borders and the space between the final forsaken border and another unreached initial one. No one of these intervals is in God. Therefore in Him the creature doesn't benefit either a evolution through which it brings to emergence new forms, or of an end or alteration, namely of a total ceasing of existing as that specific being, to start after that as something else. Therefore that is neither a movement (as alteration), not a ceasing (as death), but a stopping as eternal and identical movement, a stable mobility or a mobile stability.

A parallel place of Saint Maximos the Confessor is this: "The beginning of any natural movement of the ones who move themselves it is the genesis (*γένσις* (birth (E. l. t.'s n.)) of the ones who moves themselves, and beginning of their creation is God as Maker. End of the

But the world is a bordered space and a limited stability, and the time is a circumscribed movement. That's why the movement from during the life it transforms the ones who are in the world. But when the nature will cross with the work and with the cogitation over the space and time (namely over the ones without which doesn't exist anything, or over the limited stability and movement) and it will interweave itself with the Providence, it will find the Providence as a rationality simple and stable by nature which doesn't have any edge and therefore it doesn't have any movement. Therefore until the nature is in the world in a temporal manner, it is submitted to the transforming movement due to the limited stability of the world and of the corruption through alteration during the time. But reached in God it will have, due to the natural monad of the One in Whom it has reached<sup>631</sup>, a stability which is always in movement and a identical stabile movement, eternally done around the Same One, One and Alone. It is what the Scripture calls the steadfast and unmediated dwelling of the created ones in their first causes.

The mystery of the Pentecost it is therefore the unmediated union of the ones taken care by the Providence with the Providence itself, namely the union of the nature with the Word, through the work of the Providence, union in which doesn't appear anymore either time of becoming<sup>632</sup>. And the trumpet is the Word, like the One Who make to sound in us the godlike and unspoken knowledge. Also in Him there is expiation, as the One Who made Himself like us and He melts

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genesis of the created ones is the stability (*στάσις*) which is produced after crossing all the bordered ones by the boundlessness (*άπειρο*). In this one there stops the whole movement of the ones who moves themselves by nature, due to the fact that there isn't in it any distance or interval (*διάστημα*), therefore not having where, how and towards what to move, because it hav God Who borders even the boundlessness which borders the whole movement, as end in quality of cause" (Ambigua, Lib. 91, 1217).

<sup>631</sup> God being by His nature the unity which is identical to everything, He hasn't any border. That's why the one who is in God, by not reaching at any border, he doesn't perish and isn't altered for eternity. The borderless continuity of the divine monad, or of its life, which it becomes life to the one who has reached in God, it ensures the eternal stability of this one.

<sup>632</sup> Γένεσις. In the union with God there is not anymore: birth, or genesis, of development or death, or transformation in something else.

in Himself our lawlessness and with the gift of the spiritual grace he deifies the nature which has committed sin. And finally He is also the building of the tents, like the One Who stabilizes us in not-changeability through our habit in good like God and He constitutes the connection which brings us through transformation into immortality (45).

And if we come with the natural understanding close to Scripture, we don't believe that by slaughtering speechless beasts and through spaying blood we sweeten God to give forgiveness to the sins as a reward to the ones who bring these sacrifices. If we would believe this, we will worship, without realizing it, to a passionate God, which passionately and with much zeal desires those things for which we consider also the people who search for them with great lust, as unrestrained and uncontrolled (46). But here is about spiritual sacrifices. This is because these sacrifices we know that they aren't only the killing of the passions stabbed with the sword of the Ghost, which is the Word of God, and the intentional emptying of the entire life from the body, like the blood, but also the wise bringing of the morals and of all the natural faculties to God, as burnt offerings in that fire of the grace in ghost, for surrendering them to God (47). Thus, by understanding in a natural way<sup>633</sup> each of the symbols from the Scripture, we are killing in the height of the mysterious contemplation, as on a mountain, the seven sons of Saul, namely the temporary teaching of the law<sup>634</sup> and we eradicate Saul, namely the bodily meaning related to the letter of the Scripture, "for not staying him in all the land of Israel", namely in the spiritual contemplation. This is because by truly living this, it crushes, persecutes and eradicates the natural rationalities and thoughts, through the fact that limits the law only to the body, by honoring as godlike the reproachable passions (48). But the natural thoughts by getting approval from the law of the ghost, it kills these passion all

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<sup>633</sup> It is about the natural contemplation, which is done into ghost, through grace, unlike the bodily sight which is external.

<sup>634</sup> The number seven symbolizes the time. It is here about the temporary and passing side of the law.

together, at the beginning of the reaping of the barley, namely when through the working philosophy a balanced rationality gather in the same place all the virtues<sup>635</sup>. Then it is killed the earthly understanding of the Scriptures and the whole bodily craving is totally eradicated. This is because immediately that somebody occupies himself in a rational way with the philosophy of the virtues he naturally<sup>636</sup> moved his understanding of the Scriptures towards the ghost. He actively serves now to God into the renewal of the ghost through the highest views and not in the oldness of the letter through the low bodily and sensitive understanding of the law, towards feeding the passions and for serving the sin, like Jews do (49). He kills with the deed, through the natural thoughts, the passionate and bodily understanding of the law, as the Scripture's word tells us, by saying: "And the king took the two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, the mistress of Saul, on Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of Michal, the Saul's daughter, whom she born to Adriel, and he gave them on the hand of Gibeonites". The hand of the Gibeonites is the virtuous activity of the natural thoughts (50), through which are killed the sons of Rizpah, of Armoni and of Mephibosheth, namely the work of the passions and the fornicator movement of the thoughts, born out of the born out of the, only by uttering the words. Likewise are the five sons of Michal, namely the fornicator ways of the five senses, born out of voluptuousness, by the contrary usage of their work. These ones are killed together, as on a mountain, on the height of the spiritual contemplation, by any high and sublime in the godlike things mind, at the beginning of the reaping of the barley, namely at the beginning of the virtuous activity, or of the pious contemplation conform to the nature. It kills them together,

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<sup>635</sup> It is the first phase of the spiritual life, the phase of the purification or of achieving the virtues.

<sup>636</sup> The movement to the spiritual understanding of the Scripture is natural, because it is conform to our nature and to the nature of the Scripture. But it doesn't take place but through the natural contemplation, which is done with the help of the Ghost. The restoration in nature and the remaining in it cannot be done without the grace from above.

because it stabs in the same time the work of the passions, the ugly movement of the thoughts and the fornicator modes of the abusive work of the senses.

"And fell, he says, together with the seven ones and they killed them at the beginning of the reaping of the barley. And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and laid it down on a stone, until the rain of God fell over them from heavens". Rizpah, as I said, it means "the road of the mouth", which is the bodily teaching of the law only by uttering the word. This one, after all the passions born out of it are killed and after are shown, as on a mountain, the peaks of the natural contemplation in the heart of the ones who are dominated by it before (51), it lays down sackcloth on stone (namely on the faith in the Lord), fulfilling into ghost, through that repentance after Christ, the ordered ones. During the day and during the night she has before her eyes by memory, as some sons the bodily fulfilling of the law from before, until the rain of God fall from heavens, namely until the godlike knowledge of the Scripture is sent from the height of the spiritual contemplation (52) to quench the passions and to restore the virtues. This is because the habituation into the law's things, by coming through repentance to Christ, the true and the hard stone, it receives the godlike rain of the spiritual knowledge of the Scripture, after the fulfillment of the King David's commandment, namely of the mind powerful at seeing. This is because it is said: "And she did everything the king ordered. And after that God had mercy on the country". Consequently the habituation with the godlike Scriptures, by being moved to Christ, namely at the stone, according to the commandment of King David, namely of the "spiritual law", or of "that mind powerful at seeing", through the mediation of the repentance (of which's symbol is the sackcloth), interweaved with the working of the virtues, it makes the godlike rain of the knowledge to descend and persuades God to have mercy on the land (country) of the heart and to send the godlike torrents of the gifts (charisms) and to provide plentifully the fruits of the righteousness. Through this

it brings to an end the ignorance from before, about the godlike ones, which dominated as a famine and it fills up the country with the spiritual goods, by loading the soul with wheat, with wine and with oil. The first one (53) it strengthens the soul as teaching of the working knowledge; the second one (54) it gladdens as a godlike love which animates the ardor of desiring the union with God; and the last one (55) it lightens the face of the virtues as a smooth and serene, transparent and luminous and free of all the earthly movement removal of the passions (56).

Let's say like the great David: Let's eradicate Saul from the whole land of Israel, namely to kill the earthly and bodily serving of the law, or the Judaic way of serving and the bodily and immediate meaning of the Scripture's letter from all the mysterious contemplation and let's pass to the spiritual meaning which deifies and to reconcile with the Gibeonites (namely with the natural rationalities of the things), whom Jesus<sup>637</sup> escaped them untouched, He being the true fulfiller of the godlike promises and for whose eradication (of the Gibeonites) by Saul, God stopped the rain of the mysterious knowledge. And through Gibeonites, namely through the natural contemplation, let's kill the passionate, material and temporary understanding of the law, namely the seven men of the Saul's sons, born by Rizpah, or by the road of the mouth, which is the bodily learning of the law, and by Michal, which is interpreted as the satiation of the throat, namely the delight of the belly, the first one giving birth to Mephibosheth and to Armoni, the first one being interpreted as "the shame of the mouth" and the second one as "their anathema", of the habit and the working of the passions, and the second one begetting to Adriel, namely to the contemplative part of the soul the five sons, namely the five passionate modes of the bad using of the senses. BY eradicating these ones from the natural

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<sup>637</sup> Joshua: 9: 20: KJB: "This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them."; ROB: "But behold what are we going to do to them: let's take them in slavery and to keep them alive, for the anger to not reach to us for the oath with which we swore to them."

contemplation, we reconcile the angered God, as ones who passed from the letter to ghost. Through this we make descending the godlike rain of the knowledge and we plentifully enjoy the fruit of the righteousness. This is because by elevating the latter of the law, as a certain Saul, or the material understanding of the letter, born within the earthly to understanding ones, as some sons and nephews of Saul, to the height of the mysterious and spiritual understanding, through the mediation of the natural contemplation, we kill the bodily and the temporary meaning of the law, if we have also, together with God, hated Saul, and reckoned him no longer unworthy to reign over Israel<sup>638</sup>; namely we have rejected the bodily mode of the Scripture, namely the Judaism, for no longer reigning over the cogitating power from within us to enslave it to the body.

This is because we must hate Saul (or the bodily serving of the law) and to get him out from the kingly dignity, for he spared Agag the king of Amalek, and the fattest ones of the sheep and of the cattle of this one, as also his vineyards and his olive tree, namely the matters which kindle the anger and the lust and the causes of the caresses, and he even passed Hagar alive in the land of the promise<sup>639</sup>, which is means that he moved the calf, or the earthly thought of the body, in the place of the godlike knowledge, namely into the heart (57). This is because Agag is interpreted as “calf”, being maybe that calf on which the insane and the unwise people of Israel (58), molding

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<sup>638</sup> I Samuel: 16: 1: KJB: “AND the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.”; I Kings: 16: 1: ROB: “The Lord said towards Samuel: “.For how long will you weep for Saul, whom I have rejected, to no longer be king over Israel? Fill your horn up with chrism and go, for I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for from among his sons I have chosen to me a king.””

<sup>639</sup> I Samuel: 15: 9: KJB: “But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.”; I Kings: 15: 8: ROB: “But Saul and the people spared Agag, the best of sheep and the horned cattle, the fattened lambs and everything was the best and he didn’t want to destroy them.”

it in wilderness, it deified<sup>640</sup> it, cherishing more the pleasure of the belly than the godlike serving. This calf is destroyed by Moses and Samuel: the first one crumbling it down and scattering it under water, and the second one stabbing it with the spiritual sword<sup>641</sup>. In other words he is destroyed by the living and working grace of the Holy Ghost (because this it means Moses) and the obedience to God by fulfilling the commandments (for this it means Samuel)<sup>642</sup>. In fact Moses is interpreted as “jumping water”, and Samuel as “the obedience to God”, which is the true faith and the life according to the will of God.

Therefore the domination of the sin or the bodily thought is killed on one hand by the holy Baptism, and on the other hand is stabbed by the obedient working of the godlike commandments with the sword of the ghost (namely the sword of the godlike knowledge into ghost). This is because this obedience mysteriously shouts out towards the passion of the sin, as the great Samuel also shouted to Agag: “As your sword deprived the mothers of their sons also your mother is going to be today deprived of sons”<sup>643</sup>. Actually the passion of the

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<sup>640</sup> Exodus: 32: 8: KJB: “And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”; ROB: “By taking then out of their hands, he molded them in a mold and made out of them a molded calf and carved it with the chisel. And they said: “Behold, Israel, your god which brought you out from the land of Egypt!””

<sup>641</sup> Exodus: 32: 20; I Samuel: 15: 32: KJB: “And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.” // “Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.”; ROB: “And then taking the calf, which they made it, he burnt it in fire, he made it powder and, by spraying it with water, he gave it to the sons of Israel to drink it.” // “Then Samuel said: “Bring to me Agag, the Amalekites’ king”; and Agag came close to his shivering and said: “Surely the bitterness of the death has passed.””

<sup>642</sup> Moses symbolizes the grace of the Baptism, and Samuel the fulfilling of the commandments after that. No one is sufficient for destroying the sin without another.

<sup>643</sup> I Samuel: 15: 33: KJB: “And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.”; ROB: “But Samuel answered him: “As your sword deprived the mother of their children, likewise your mother to be without son amongst women”. And Samuel cut

stomach's covetousness deprived of sons many virtues, by destroying them through the shiny and slippery thought of the pleasure, as by a sword. This is because through intemperance it destroys the seeds of the temperance, through covetousness it breaks the equal scales of the righteousness, through the bodily love for the self it cuts off the natural tie of the love for people, and shortly speaking the passion of the belly's covetousness it kills all the children born out of virtues. And this passion is abolished, as I said, only by the grace of the Baptism and by fulfilling the commandments through the obedience to God (59). Therefore after God anointed the law as king of Israel, which cultivates through the letter this passion, He repents and passes the power of the kingdom from the law, by giving it to David, namely to the evangelical and spiritual law. This is because David is the son of Jesse, and Jesse is interpreted as "the making of God". Therefore the Holy Gospel is the making's fruit, or of the own work of God into body. The Gospel receives the kingdom for endless ages. Under its rule we are partaker to impassable joyfulness and gladness, for the Gospel is the without-evening and endless day. This is because it is said: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let's rejoice and be glad in it"<sup>644</sup>. And the day is means here the evangelical grace<sup>645</sup>, or the mystery of that One Who has brought this grace and in which He wants us to walk, as the godlike Apostle says, all of us with decency, as in the day of the knowledge and of the truth<sup>646</sup>. This is because the day of the eternal light is Christ Himself, Who must live within all the ones who believed in Him, into the decency of the virtues.

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Agag before the Lord in Gilgal."

<sup>644</sup> Psalms: 118: 24: KJB: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."; 117: 24: ROB: "This is the day that the Lord has made it; let's rejoice and glad in it."

<sup>645</sup> The grace ( $\eta \chiάρη$ ) is in the Greek language of feminine gender, therefore it can be understood here as the day.

<sup>646</sup> Romans: 13: 13: KJB: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."; ROB: "Let's walk decently, as during the day: not in feasts and in drunkenness, not in fornications and in shameful deeds, not in strife and in envy;"

This is because solely Him has been made by God, according to the body, without seed, and He renewed the nature's laws and He has been "prepared before the face of the nations, light to be unveiled by the peoples and towards the glory of His people Israel"<sup>647</sup>. This is because our Lord truly is light to the Gentiles, unveiling to them through the true knowledge the eyes of the understanding, which are covered before by the darkness of the nescience (60); and truly He has prepared Himself for the faithful peoples like good example of the godlike virtue and living (61), towards Whom by looking us like towards the guide of our salvation, we succeed to achieve, by imitating Him through our deeds, the virtues, as much as it is possible to us. But He is, as God and the Word, also glory to people Israel, because He fills up the mind of the brightness of the godlike light of the knowledge through mysterious contemplation (62). Or maybe the Scriptures calls "peoples" the natural rationalities and "face" of theirs the stainless glory, of which preparation (light towards knowledge) has made Himself the Word as Maker of the nature (63). And the "Gentiles"<sup>648</sup> are the passions against nature (64), which are unveiled in their places for hiding, by giving the light of the knowledge, and he totally pluck they off from nature. So the Word makes Himself glory to Israel because He cleans the mind of those passions against nature and He adorns the mind with those rationalities according to the nature, but besides this also because He adorns surrounds the mind with the diadem of the not-changeability, through deification (65). This is because the true glory of Israel it consists in deliverance from the passions which are contrary to the nature and in achieving the rationalities of the nature and of the goods from above nature.

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<sup>647</sup> Luke: 2: 31-32: KJB: "Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; // A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."; "Which You have prepared it before the face of all peoples, // Light to be unveiled to the Gentiles and glory to Your people Israel."

<sup>648</sup> The "gentiles" have a meaning inferior to "peoples", being the stranger of the pagan gentiles.

And him, who spiritually receives this David, though he is envied by Saul, he is not defeated. On the opposite, being given his great love for people and the lack of passion at which he has reached, even being hated, he appeases through the guitar of the Ghost the enemy tormented by the evil ghost and soothes him, escaping him, as from a cunning devil from the evil illness (epilepsy) of the earthly thought<sup>649</sup>. This is because everyone who hates out of envy and denigrates with evilness the ones who is stronger in the toils of the virtues and richer in the word of the spiritual knowledge, he is a Saul tormented by the evil ghost, because he cannot stand the fame and the fame and the happiness of the one who is better in virtue and in knowledge and he becomes the more furious as he cannot kill the benefactor<sup>650</sup>. Often this one spitefully rebukes even his most beloved son Jonathan, namely the intimate thought of the conscience, who rebuked the unjust hatred and who tells with respect for the truth the worthiness of the hated one<sup>651</sup>. Therefore he behaves himself like Saul, the insane of yore, towards whom Samuel said, after he transgressed the godlike commandments: “Foolishly you have transgressed my

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<sup>649</sup> I Samuel: 16: 18; 18: 9: “Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.” // “And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.”; I Kings: 16: 18; 18: 9: ROB: “Then one of his servants said: “Behold I have seen at Jesse the Bethlehemite a son who know how to sing, a sturdy man in war, skilful in speaking and handsome man and the Lord is with him.” // “And since that day and during all the following time, he has been looking at David suspiciously.”

<sup>650</sup> I Samuel: 20: 30: KJB: “Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother’s nakedness?”; I Kings: 20: 30: ROB: “Then the king became fiercely angry on Jonathan and said to him: “Worthless and disobedient son! Do I not know that you have made friendship with the son of Jesse towards your shame and towards the mockery of your mother?”

<sup>651</sup> I Samuel: 19: 5: KJB: “For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?”; I Kings: 19: 5: ROB: “He put his life in danger, for hitting the Philistines and the Lord made great deliverance to all Israel. You saw this and you rejoiced. But why do you want to commit sin against innocent blood and to kill David for no reason?”

commandment, which God gave it to you”<sup>652</sup>. And Saul is, as I said before, either the written law, or the nation of the Jews, which lives according to the written law. This is because from both of these ones, which are interweaved together in an earthly manner, the Ghost of the Lord departs from them, the Ghost of the Lord being the spiritual contemplation and knowledge, and instead of Him it comes the evil ghost (namely the earthly thought), which torment them with the unceasingly restlessness and torments of the ones which are submitted to creation and to corruption, as ones which are possessed by the illness of the thoughts` fickleness. This is because the law considered only in its letter and materially understood, it seems to be dominated by the evil disease, being tormented by countless contradictions and not having any harmony in itself, and the Judaizing mind, bewildered to insanity by the spinning and the fickleness of the material things, it necessarily changes its own disposition. But when David, namely our Lord Jesus Christ, Who truly is singer by nature, He enchant through the ghost of the mysterious contemplation, the law and the Jew, and makes the first one spiritually from earthly, and it moves the second one from faithlessness to faith. Therefore like Saul, both the Judaic law and nation can be possessed and wise. The law is possessed when it is earthly understood, and the Jew is possessed when he wants to serve earthly to God. And again, the law is wise when it is spiritually understood, and the Jew is wise when he has passed from the bodily serving to the spiritually serving to God.

It is to be noticed that the ones liberated by Jesus are killed by Saul. This is because the ones who are saved by the ghost are killed by the letter. That`s why God Who anointed Saul, I mean the written law, to reign over Israel, He repents Himself when He sees the law bodily understood by the Jews

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<sup>652</sup> I Samuel: 19: 5: KJB: “Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?”; I Kings: 19: 5: ROB: “Why didn’t you obey the voice of the Lord, and cast yourself upon the spoil and you did evil in the eyes of the Lord?”

and He give power to the kingdom of the ghost, which is the neighbor of the letter, but better than it. "And I will give, He says, the kingdom to your neighbor, who is better than you are"<sup>653</sup>. This is because David was nigh to Saul, likewise the ghost is in the vicinity of the letter, usually showing himself about the death of the letter (66).

Let's also pray the spiritual David (67) to sing to our possessed by the material things mind, the harp of the contemplation and of the spiritual knowledge and to banish away the evil ghost, which rolls it through the senses down in the material things, to be able to spiritually understand the law and to find out the rationality which is hidden in it, for achieving to ourselves a steadfast wealth towards the eternal life for not remaining us only with the loan of the symbolical law of the latter, strangers to that knowledge according to the grace, and to occupy ourselves only with the asking for the godlike ones, as ones who do not see, lacking the al-clear sight of the truth indicated in the mysterious words (68). (This is because Saul, interpreted in Greek language, it means both these ones; because besides the told things, it means also either "a borrowed thing", or "question". And the written law is both of them. It is the first thing, because isn't a characteristic to the nature thing, but it accompanies the nature in its existence; and it is the second one because it stirs us up towards the true knowledge and towards the original wisdom, us who do not reckon the question, as the understanding itself of the truth of the godlike things, but we strive ourselves only through the bodily symbols of the law, as through a certain question, towards understanding the godlike things). This is for resting ourselves from the care of the question, in which maybe, often, also straying (69), once we have reached at the truth of the things we are asking for, and to receive the happiness

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<sup>653</sup> I Samuel: 15: 28: KJB: "And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou."; I Kings: 15: 28: ROB: "Then Samuel said: "Today the Lord has broken the kingdom of Israel from you and He has given it to other one who is better than you are,"

produced in an unchanged way by the impartation of these things, (70) happiness which transforms the characteristics of our nature according to its image, into Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, to Whom to be the glory forever and ever, Amen.

### Scholia

1. The mind cleaned to the end through virtues, being taught to know the rationalities of the virtues, making, in a godlike way, the knowledge imprinted in these virtues as its own face. This is because through itself the mind is shapeless and without characteristics, having a shape achieved either through the knowledge into ghost founded on virtues, or on the nescience produced by the passions.

2. The one who has received as shape of the mind the godlike knowledge into ghost, the one out of virtues, it is said to be suffering the godlike ones, because he hasn't received this one through nature due to the existence, but through grace according to participation. And the ones who hasn't received that knowledge according out of grace, even he would say something related to knowledge, he doesn't know out of experience the meaning of what he is saying. This is because the simple learning of a thing doesn't give the knowledge which is given by the habituation.

3. He says well how Saul must be understood in this place of the Scripture. This is because this meaning it fits in many regards to the meanings from other places and to what it results out of history.

4. Like the ones who is together with a mistress he doesn't have the lawful marriage, likewise the ones who occupies himself with the bodily learning of the law, he doesn't have a lawful companionship, giving birth out of it illegitimate dogmas, which decay together with the body's life.

5. The one who impropriates the Scripture in a bodily manner, he learns out of it the sin with the deed, and his mind is habituated to cogitate at sin. That one learns out of the law's

letter about caressing, mating with harlots and killings, and he comes to the habit of reckoning as defiled the whole creation of God.

6. Another spiritual meaning. The “anathema” it is this world, as place of damnation, which is born out of passion or through lust the ones who doesn’t penetrate with the mind at the ghost of the law.

7. The thing towards which we feel ourselves attracted, at that one we also cogitate with the mind.

8. According to another meaning, the “anathema” is the movement without face of the passions; and the “shame of their mouth” is the movement of the mind which gives a face for the senses and it provides through contriving a matter fitted to the passion.

9. It presents in summary the three meanings of the text.

10. The one who is convinced that it is commandment from God to bodily delight himself according to the law, he gladly accepts the covetousness of the belly, as a godlike gift towards together living, and out of it he gives birth to the modes which defile by evil using the work of the senses.

11. Short recapitulation of the things said before, through which he shows that the ones who bodily understands the law he has the teaching as a mistress, out of which are born the habit and the work of the passions, and he brings in home the covetousness of the belly, as it would be godlike, giving birth to the modes which defile through by evil using the senses, as through them to eradicate the natural rationalities and seeds out of things.

12. The one who remains at the law’s symbols he cannot watch at the things` nature according to the rationality and to take care of the rationalities put by the Maker due to the difference between the symbols and the nature of the things.

13. The nature`s rationalities carry woods, making themselves matter on behalf of the knowledge of the godlike ones, and they carry water, by doing the cleaning of passion and the spreading the life-giver work of the Ghost.

14. Another meaning of the same things, presenting through Gibeonites the calling of the Gentiles.

15. Armoni and Mephibosheth are the matter and the shape, and the five sons of Michal are the evil usage of the senses; interweaving these ones together, namely weaving the senses with the matter and the shape, consequently to the bodily understanding of the law, the one who limits the meaning to the letter, on one hand he gives birth to the bodily passion, and on the other hand, he corrupts the natural rationalities.

16. The passion and the nature, according to the rationality of their existence, they never exist together.

17. The one who doesn't believe that the Scripture is spiritual, he doesn't feel the scarcity of his knowledge.

18. When David is understood as law, in Judaic sense, it is interpreted as "despising", for the tradition of the bodily interpretation of the godlike things, and when it means the ghost, in a Christian sense, it is interpreted as "the one strong at sight", for the contemplation of the knowledge which it takes place within mind.

19. Through the soul of the Scripture he understood its ghost, and through the body its letter.

The three years are the three laws, the written one, the natural one and the one of the grace, which comes one after another. Therefore the ones who understand the bodily written law, he doesn't nourish the soul with virtues; likewise the ones who doesn't notice the rationalities of the things, he doesn't plentifully nourish his mind with the diverse wisdom of God; and the one who doesn't know the great mystery of the new grace, he doesn't rejoice himself with the hope of the future deification. Therefore the lack of the spiritual contemplation under the regime of the written law it is followed by the lack of the diverse wisdom of God which can be receives through the natural law, and this one it is followed at its turn by the

ignoring of the deification which will be given through grace on the basis of the new mystery<sup>654</sup>.

21. The one who doesn't understand spiritually the law, even if the law died for him, being given the fact that the law doesn't serve him bodily anymore, but he still keeps the low meanings of the law, he is still sparing the children and the nephews of Saul. That's why he is tormented by the hunger of the knowledge.

22. As the face is the characteristic seal for everyone, likewise the spiritual knowledge characterizes and reveals the godlike one. That's why the one who searches for this knowledge, he searches the face of the Lord.

23. David is also interpreted as "the strong in sight one" and "the penetrating mind".

24. The one who has entirely become a body through the bloody sacrifices brought according to the letter of the law, he loves the nescience, by reckoning that the commandment is only towards the body's pleasure.

25. The one who serves, he says, bodily to the law, he gives birth to the sin with the deed as matter and he shapes the consent of the mind to the sin as form, through the pleasures corresponding to the senses. And the one who receive the Scripture spiritually, he kills through the natural cogitations on the height of the contemplation the working of the sin as matter and the consent to the sin as form, together with the modes of the abusive using of the senses, in order of the pleasure, as some sons and nephews of the written law.

26. Without the natural contemplation nobody knows the difference between the law's symbols and the godlike things.

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<sup>654</sup> It is interesting that in this order of the laws, the natural law is placed after the written one, being reckoned as on higher stair. This order corresponds to the three stages of the spiritual ascension: of the virtuous activity, of the natural contemplation and of the deification. This order of the laws, we understand it of we consider it not so much on the plan of the history, but on the life of each individual. This is if we understand through the written law especially the law of the Ten Commandments. Thus each man must begin from the fulfilling of the commandments, to be elevated at the contemplation of God within the nature and then to be united with God.

27. Through hanging by the neck he understood the revealing of the killed letter of the law on the height of the contemplation, through the knowledge into ghost.

28. Through “the land of Israel” he understood the whole rationality and the whole mode of the contemplation, within which there cannot at all be maintained the teaching of the bodily understanding of the law.

29. The Ghost, he says, is the Giver of the life, and the law is the killer of the life. Consequently there cannot work in the same time both the letter and the ghost, as there don’t exist together what is like-maker with what is maker of corruption.

30. The little piece which is cut off (the foreskin), it is something natural and everything that is natural it is a deed of the godlike creation. And the deed of the godlike creation is “very good”, according to the word which says: “God saw all the things He did, and behold, they were very good”. But the law, commanding the removal of that little piece, through circumcision, it shows God as one who would artificially correct His own work, what even by thinking at, it constitutes the peak of the impiety. That’s why the one who understands in a natural manner<sup>655</sup> the symbols of the law, he know that God doesn’t aims to artificially correct the nature, but He orders to be cut the passion added to the rationality (the constitution) of the soul and typically indicated through that bodily little part. This one is rejected by the knowledge through the manhood of the will shown into doing. This is because the priest who does the circumcision he symbolizes the knowledge which saves, as a knife against the passion, the manhood shown through deeds. So is abolished the bodily teaching of the law when the Ghost overwhelms the letter.

31. Short definition of the mysterious (mystical) contemplation.

32. The definition of the mysterious institution of the Saturday, through which it is shown in a mystical way what the Saturday is and which is its spiritual rationality. It is the

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<sup>655</sup> Through the natural contemplation into Ghost.

ceasing of the passions and of the mind's movement around the nature of the created ones.

33. Namely God.

34. What the beginning of the worlds it means.

35. The definition of the kindness's crown.

36. Another mysterious definition of the same things.

37. Here it is said that the restraint it is a work of the Providence as one which cleans the willing passions, and the patience is a work of the Judgment, as one which confronts the unwilling trials.

38. Through the first holiday it is understood the Pascua.

39. Through the second holyday it is understood the Pentecost.

40. The third holyday is the day of the Reconcilement from the seventh month.

41. Look how the law destroys the ones who understand it bodily, by convincing them to serve to the creature instead of serving the Maker and it makes them to imagine that the things made for them are by nature worthy to be consecrated, and it determines them to not know the One for Whom they have been created.

42. How can be God the Saturday itself?

43. How is God the mysterious Pascua itself?

44. About the mystery of celebrating the Pentecost. Here he explains the mysterious spiritual meaning of the indicated ones, by understanding through Pentecost God Himself. This is because the monad<sup>656</sup> remaining standing after the sevenfold development of the week, it gives the Pentecost; or again, through its addings to the monad itself it becomes decade, and this one by being multiplied with five it gives the Pentecost, which otherwise is the beginning and the end of the ones of its (beginning, because it is before any quantity, and the end, because is above any quantity). But likewise also God, Who allowed to be symbolized by monad through analogy, He is the

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<sup>656</sup> The number which comes after  $7 \times 7 = 49$ .

beginning and the end of all things and the rationality through which everything exists. He is the beginning, because He is before any being and movement; is the end, because He is above any being and movement; He is the rationality, because in quality of cause He is the Providence of everybody and He sustains the individual form, through which each creature remains in its own rationality. Therefore when the times and the ages will come to an end, of which symbol is the week, there won't be but God alone, without the mediation of the things without which there no thing exists, namely places and times, by sustaining Himself, through the true union with the creatures, the being of the saved ones, namely the created nature. This is because he symbolized this one through the number five, not only due to the senses under which it falls, but also due to the universal nescience, which it consists in embracing through the knowledge without mistake of the spiritual (intelligible) and rational ones, of the sensitive beings, of the living creatures and of the things. Therefore the nature of the created ones will cease once to stay in space and to move in time, through the true union with God, for Whom it was created. This is because once it has made to itself God Himself, according to the rationality of the Providence, its won quality, through the decade of the commandments (by showing through characteristic features the impropriation of the deification through grace), it liberate itself from the circumcision given to it by the state into space and by the movement into time<sup>657</sup>, by receiving as an always mobile state (resting) the unlimited possession of the godlike ones and as a self-standing movement the insatiable desire after them<sup>658</sup>.

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<sup>657</sup> It will liberate itself from the circumscribing into space through state and into time through movement.

<sup>658</sup> Often the scholia to this work of Saint Maximos the Confessor bring precious completion of meaning, or meanings which aren't in the content of the work. (For instance also the scholia no. 20 and 21). Such a contribution it is brought also by the present scholia. This scholium it ascertains why the future life will be an always mobile state, of resting; because it will possess the godlike good. Also why it will be in the same time a staying movement, with the accent on movement; this is because that good, being borderless, it will always maintain the desire to comprise it even fuller. Or it will be a mobile resting, because the possession

45. During the seventh day there are three celebrations: of the trumpets, of the reconciliation and of erecting the tents. From amongst these ones, the trumpet is the symbol of the law and of the Prophets and of the knowledge preached by these ones. The holyday of the reconciliation is the symbol of the reconciliation of God with the man through embodiment. This is because God, by willingly putting on the damnation of the condemned one, He melted down the callous enmity against Him, which existed before. And the erection of the tents is the symbol of the resurrection and of the transformation of everybody in the state of not-changeability<sup>659</sup>.

46. The one who rejoices himself of bloody simple sacrifices, he is a passionate one who determines the ones who bring sacrifices to walk on the trace of the passions. And the one who honestly honors somebody, he rejoices himself of what the one honored by him rejoices also<sup>660</sup>.

47. The Scripture reckons as sacrifices the stabbing of the passions and the consecration to God of the natural faculties. From amongst these ones the ram is the symbol of the rationality, the ox is the symbol of the anger and the he-goat symbolizes the lust.

48. When the earthly meaning of the Scripture dominates over the soul, the soul rejects the natural rationalities by killing them through the evil usage of the natural powers.

49. Immediately that somebody ceases to bodily and according to the senses understand the Scripture, he crosses with the mind to the ghost, through the mediation of the

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will embrace a borderless good; and a staying movement, because the limitless of the possessed good will ceaselessly maintain the desire after it.

<sup>659</sup> I have found nowhere at Saint Maximos the Confessor, that the embodiment and the sacrifice of Christ had as purpose to pay to God with His life for the man, in the meaning of the theory of the satisfaction; the reconciliation was ontologically done in Christ, and not juridical between Christ and the Father.

<sup>660</sup> If God would rejoice Himself of sacrifices of blood, it would be right also that the believer to rejoice himself of receiving sacrifices from others, namely to maintain himself into egotism.

nature, spiritually committing those ones, which when committed by the Jew angered God.

50. What the hand of the Gibeonites is, to whom David surrenders the ones out of the Saul's seed.

51. The hanging by the neck is, he says, the bringing in sight suffered by passions, unveiled by the high thoughts of the nature through the high contemplation.

52. The habituation with the bodily fulfillment of the law, having through repentance, before the eyes, the bodily meanings of the killed law, if it is placed next to the word of Christ, it receives as a rain the heavenly illuminations of the knowledge.

53. Namely the wheat.

54. Namely the wine.

55. Namely the oil.

56. He called the "wheat" as strengthening of the soul, in its quality of spiritual knowledge; the "wine", means for gladdening the heart, as one which commits the union with God through love; and the "oil" he said that lightens the face, being the characteristic sign of the spiritual grace, which lightens the mind in the state of dispassion.

57. Amalekites is the covetousness of the belly. King Amalek is the earthly thought. The oxen and the sheep of this one are the matters which nourish the passions. The life is the naughty movement of the thought. The olive tree is the brightness which lights up the lust after pleasure. The one who insists around the bodily nature of the law it moves these ones in the habituation of the serving of God, as in a holy land by taking as payment for them his own rejection by God.

58. "Insane" was called the Jewish people as faithless, and "unwise", as the one who was committing the evil, or "impious and sinful".

59. The passion of the covetousness of the belly it kills, he says, the godlike offspring of the virtues. But at its turn it is killed by the grace of the faith and by the obedience to the

godlike commandments, through the rationality filled up by knowledge.

60. How the Lord is light.

61. How the Lord is preparedness before the face of all peoples.

62. How the Lord is also glory to Israel.

63. What the “peoples” are and what the preparedness before the face of all peoples is, according to other meaning.

64. What the “gentiles” are, who, by coming, the Word is unveiling them.

65. In what meaning is the Word again glory to Israel.

66. Immediately that somebody kills the bodily meaning of the law, which is in its letter, he receives the Word into Ghost (the rationality) as emperor.

67. Through David he understood also the Lord and the Gospel and the spiritual law and the knowledge and the contemplation and the doing and the new people. It can be understood in many ways, according to the diverse places.

68. The one who has only the types, but not also the archetypes of the mysteries, he only has the question, but not also the knowledge of the enlightenments into ghost.

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